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SOUTH PACIFIC ADVENTURE
PAGE 62**

DECEMBER 1999
VOLUME 7 NO. 6
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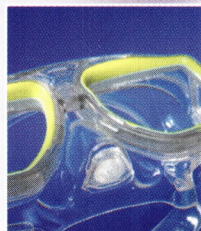
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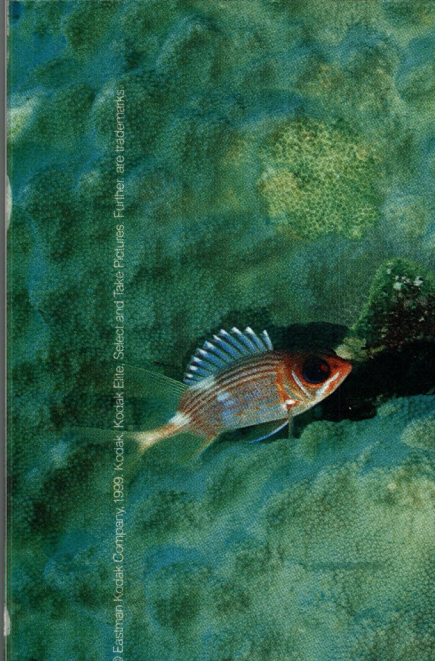
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One main reason that diving in Bonaire has remained so good is the island's commitment to marine conservation and to educating visitors.

WALT STEARNS

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Even when official channels shut down, intrepid treasure hunters find a way to make dreams come true.

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Still pining for the perfect pioneering experience? Papua New Guinea brings back the sense of discovery for today's explorers.

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HUMANN/DELOACH *NEW VIEWS ON FISH BEHAVIOR*

From the REEF authors who brought you the book on reef fish, creatures and corals, here's a new learning tool — a text on reef fish behavior.

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DENISE MATTIA *TWO WORDS: DIVE FREEDOM*

When all it takes is a giant stride off a dock to begin your diving adventure, you know you're off to a grand vacation.



The essential ingredient to cold-water diving is the drysuit. Check out SD's lineup.

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Cover

Tammy Peluso captured this photo of a giant anemone, clown fish and diver on an Australian reef in the Coral Sea.

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The Next Best Thing

"Where's your favorite place to dive?" Working for a dive magazine, I hear this question quite often.

"Best for what?" I usually reply. "Colorful reefs, big animals, soft corals, artifacts?"

This answer usually allows me to steer the conversation toward a specific topic and away from making a sweeping generalization that would place one single piece of water above all others on the planet.

In part, I shy away from judging any one site "the best" simply because I enjoy so many diverse types of underwater terrain. I can be happy on a wall in the Red Sea or the Cayman Islands, in awe of the war wrecks of Bikini Atoll or coastal New

Jersey, or captivated by the fish life of Puget Sound or the Florida Keys.

But in addition to my love for all things submerged, there is another reason I shy away from rating systems when discussing dive destinations. The minute you start thinking in terms of best and worst, you turn the entire underwater experience into a commodity. Suddenly, you are spending your bottom time keeping score rather than experiencing and enjoying the moment.

As far as I'm concerned, any visit to the foreign, fascinating underwater world is an adventure in the making. That's why, when pressed to select my absolute, all-time favorite dive, I usually answer, "The next one." —Pierce Hoover

Contributors

AMOS NACHOUM | TREASURES OF CUBA PG. 56



Amos Nachoum's photos, spanning this issue's features on ice diving and treasure hunting, represent just a taste of what he has done throughout the diving world. Amos has led National Geographic expedition teams with Dr. Eugenie Clark, Dr. Sylvia Earle and astronaut Buzz Aldrin and has co-produced documentaries with Stan Waterman. He was the team leader for National Geographic's Red Sea, Great White Shark and November '96 Killer Whale photo expeditions. His photos and essays have appeared in more than 500 publications.

In 1988, Amos won Nikon's underwater photography contest, and in 1993, the Communication Art Award. Currently he is an instructor on the Nikonos team of professional photographers and conducts his own SLR and advanced U/W photo seminars.

RICK SAMMON

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Sport Diver Images columnist Rick Sammon has produced 20 marine-conservation, photography and children's books, including the international best-

seller, *Seven Underwater Wonders of the World*. He also hosts the ESPN *Photo Safari* programs where he has shared photo tips with celebs such as Dana Delany, John O'Hurley, David Allen Grier and Maria Conchita Alonso.

Rick is president of CEDAM International, the organization dedicated to Conservation, Education, Diving And Marine-Research. He has won the Rolex award, NOGI award and the Ben Franklin award (for the best children's book of 1997).

MICHAEL P. O'NEILL

TEN DAYS TO WALINDI PG. 62



Michael Patrick O'Neill is a freelance writer and photographer specializing in travel and natural history subjects, particularly tropical Atlantic and Indo-

Pacific destinations, marine wildlife and environmental issues. In this issue of *Sport Diver* he travels to one of the most remote dive venues — Papua New Guinea — and to one of the most popular — Bonaire.

Michael is originally from Sao Paulo, Brazil, and now lives in southeast Florida. He is a prolific writer and experienced photographer and has traveled extensively worldwide. Michael is a contributing editor to several U.S. and international consumer publications.

Sport Diver

PIERCE HOOVER Editor

CHRISTINE DUMMIT Managing Editor

HEATHER CALLAHAN Associate Editor

TERRI BODDORFF, LEIGH DUNCAN Copy Editors

DAVID WEAVER Art Director

Contributors

YVETTE CARDOZO, ELLSWORTH BOYD, CHRIS CRUMLEY, AMOS NACHOUM, PAUL HUMANN, NED DELOACH, TAMMY PELUSO, JOHN KINSSELLA, RICK SAMMON, WALT STEARNS, BRENDA WEAVER, MICHAEL P. O'NEILL

NISSA EBERLY

Production Coordinator

KRISTIN BINGMAN, JOE TUCKER

Production Artists

Electronic Production and Prepress by
WORLD PREPRESS SERVICES

Advertising Sales

LANCE FAHRNEY Associate Publisher

407-628-4802; e-mail: lance.fahrney@worldpub.net

CAROL PERLINSKY Regional Manager

ARUBA / BONAIRE / CURAÇAO/PUERTO RICO/COZUMEL

908-604-7988; Fax: 908-604-7989

e-mail: carol.perlinsky@worldpub.net

LAURIE HARDIN Advertising Sales Representative
CAYMAN ISLANDS / BAHAMAS / TURKS & CAICOS / U.S. AND BRITISH
VIRGIN ISLANDS / BERMUDA / FLORIDA / ST. KITTS & NEVIS / SABA /
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GRENADINES / GRENADA
407-628-4802

e-mail: laurie.hardin@worldpub.net

KATHY ROTHSCHILD

407-628-4802

e-mail: kathy.rothschild@worldpub.net

KATHY MIKITA Marketplace

407-628-4802

e-mail: kathy.mikita@worldpub.net

STEPHEN HAMEL-SMITH Internet

407-628-4802

e-mail: stephen.hamel-smith@worldpub.net

JOSIE RODRIGUEZ Advertising Coordinator

407-628-4802 x1254

e-mail: josie.rodriguez@worldpub.net

AMY PERRY Advertising Traffic Coordinator

407-628-4802 x1212

e-mail: amy.perry@worldpub.net

World Publications

TERRY SNOW President

DAVE FREYGANG Group Publisher

STEVE BLOUNT Editorial Director

PIERCE HOOVER Editorial Creative Director

MARTIN S. WALKER/WALKER COMMUNICATIONS Advertising
Consultants

BRUCE MILLER Circulation Director

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TERRY DORNER Vice President/Events & Sports Marketing

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BONI BRUUN Human Resources Manager

CLAIRE POERTNER Circulation Graphic Artist

SUZANNE GIBSON Circulation Business Analyst

MELISSA HOUSE Marketing Assistant

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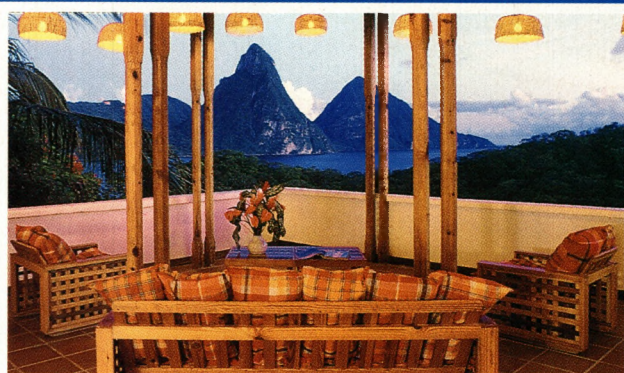
Belize



Turneffe Island Lodge

Turneffe Island Lodge continues to be one of the most consistently dependable resorts in Belize, thanks largely to its excellent staff. Resort accommodations don't come more South-Seas romantic than this; guest cottages built on the beach facing the sea are so artfully tucked away into the surrounding gardens that at first you think you have stumbled onto someone's private estate. Each of the 12 double rooms has a screened porch, and private bath and shower. Located just 10 minutes by boat to the famous dive site The Elbow, known as the best dive site in Belize. Computer divers welcome. Seven-night packages are Saturday to Saturday only and include 3-tank boat dives daily, all meals and round-trip transfers from Belize City.

St. Lucia



Anse Chastanet

Anse Chastanet is one of the Caribbean's most unique hideaways and St. Lucia's only resort located in the heart of the Marine Reserves. Anse Chastanet's stunning hillside-beachside setting amid a 500-acre plantation with 49 individually designed rooms, unique architectural features and traditional Caribbean charm attract the individualist traveler, escapist, romantics, honeymooners, nature lovers and, of course, scuba divers. The spectacular coral reefs just offshore and within close range offer a snorkeling and scuba diving paradise for amateurs and pros alike. Dive with Anse Chastanet's PADI/SSI/NAUI facility SCUBA St. Lucia -St. Lucia's premier scuba operation.

Cayman



Cayman Diving Lodge East End

The Cayman Diving Lodge is a small, dedicated diving lodge located on the East End, where the best diving is always found. The lodge is run by competent professionals who love diving. Located far from the hustle and bustle of Seven Mile Beach and the cruise crowds, the lodge caters to diving enthusiasts. The Cayman Lodge now offers computer diving, no limit on the bottom time within decompression limits. With our new PRO 48 custom dive boat you now have the fastest and most advanced boat for the diving of your dreams. All rooms are air-conditioned. All packages include three-tank boat diving daily, all meals and round-trip transfers.

Fiji



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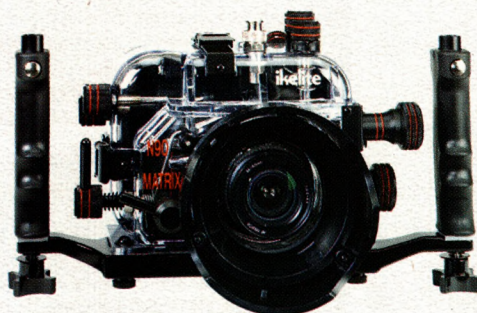
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Aquashot 3

This simple to use housing accepts the current 35mm single-use disposable cameras from Kodak, Fuji or Ikelite and the Kodak single-use Funsaver APS camera.

A full line of accessories are available, including a close-up lens, macro lens and framer, external Substrobes AQ/S and travel bag. Operates to 125 feet.



SLR-AF Case

The Ikelite SLR Case has evolved into a classic providing dependable performance for over 25 years. It is probably the safest enclosure money can buy and provides optical capabilities equal to anything on the market. An assortment of interchangeable lens ports allow use of most macro, wide angle, and zoom lenses. The SLR-AF Case is part of a full system of TTL strobes, mounting systems and accessories. The clear housing allows visual assurance the system is safe with a clear view of the camera information and control functions. Housings are injection molded of clear polycarbonate for its superior strength and corrosion-free properties, and operate safely to 60m (200') working depth.

Digital Exposure Meter

Ikelite's unique Digital Exposure meter provides accurate readings for both ambient light and flash photography. The compact amphibious design can be used above water or underwater to 200 feet. Automatically shuts down after 5 minutes of inactivity or lock on for continuous operation. Memory feature retains all settings: ISO film speed, exposure compensation, etc, when the meter is turned off or the battery is changed.



Substrobes

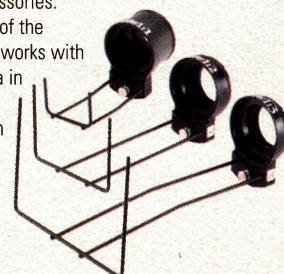
Designed and built in the USA for both the professional and amateur photographer, Ikelite offers 5 models of underwater strobes to meet different needs and budgets. The Substroke 50 is the brightest and fastest recycling strobe in its class. The Substroke 100A offers variable output and angle of coverage. The 200 and 400 are the choice of pros the world over. All Ikelite Substrobes are covered by a two year limited warranty supported by a proven commitment to service unmatched in the diving industry worldwide.



Nikonos Accessories

Ikelite offers a complete selection of Nikonos accessories. The N5 Tray and Handle become an integrated part of the camera, incorporates two Ikelite strobe mounts and works with Rotating Tray (shown). Velcro strap holds the camera in the palm of your hand. Rapid Film Advance lever included. Extension tubes for 35mm lens available in reproduction ratios of 1:1, 1:2 and 1:3.

Several Nikonos/Substroke packages are also available.



For additional information contact your local dive shop or Ikelite for a free catalog.



FUN IS NOTHING NEW

I just read the letters to the editor concerning the new Open Water Diver materials from PADI and the response from Karl Shreeves. It's interesting that Karl says people "learn better when they're having fun" so their manual now "makes learning fun."

In 1990, SSI introduced a new home-study program that included a manual, video and study guide. The objective was to produce an easy-to-read manual with an entertaining video, because we recognized that people were learning to have fun. Therefore, we reasoned, learning should be fun and convenient. This was also the motivation behind home study.

At the time, the SSI manual was downplayed by many in the PADI network because it didn't have the look and feel of a college text; therefore it couldn't be a serious learning tool. Our groundbreaking effort to save stu-

dents' valuable time through home study was also criticized.

Well, almost 10 years later, the world is finally catching up. Now hot topics are easy-to-read texts, "light" teaching techniques, and making learning convenient.

Now I know how Apple must have felt when they saw Windows 95.

— Gary Clark
Scuba Schools International
Director of Product Development

Touche, Mr. Clark.

WHAT'S IN A SMILE?

I just finished reading the article, "Welcome to the Food Chain," in the Sept./Oct. issue. Sorry, guys, but I'm not buying the Terry Maas story on the shark attack. It kinda sounds like a politically correct cover story in a time when sharks are being needlessly slaughtered. In this day and age you can't print an article on a guy killing

a 1000-pound shark for \$500 and ego gratification, can you, Mr. Bernstein?


Next time you expect your readers to believe that Maas was so upset about having to kill the shark with the old "it was either him or me" defense, do not print a photograph of him smiling so happily while displaying his catch for all the world to see. Perhaps Mr. Bernstein and *Sport Diver* should view *Wag the Dog* before publishing any articles like this in the future.

— Ken Travis

A.J. Bernstein (Ms., actually, not Mr.) insists that Maas had a truly life-threatening experience — as she witnessed it. She describes his smile in the photo as almost a grimace.

Letters? Send them to *Sport Diver* Letters, 330 W. Canton Ave., Winter Park, FL 32789, or e-mail to sportdiver@worldzine.com. ■











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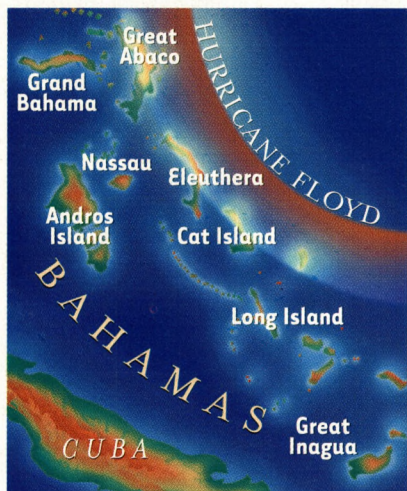


Test pilot a new scooter ...
check on your favorite
Bahamas sites ... investigate
free diving off Grand Cay-
man ... visit the Marine
Marketplace ...

BAHAMAS RECOVER FROM HURRICANE

September's record-breaking Hurricane Floyd blew directly over the Bahamian Out Islands. At press time, the country's Ministry of Tourism reported that San Salvador, Cat Island and especially Abaco and Eleuthera suffered the most damage. Many homes and buildings experienced structural and water damage as well as downed power and phone lines. Airports, offices and schools are open on the islands, but some of the hotels in the area will be closed during the fall season for repairs (hotel status reports are available at 800-611-3661).

Nassau and Grand Bahama islands



BRENDA WEAVER

pulled through the Category 4 hurricane with only minor cosmetic damage. The major resorts and hotels are open with the exception of The Sheraton Grand on Paradise Island, which will be closed through February 2000.

Neal Watson, president of the Bahamas Dive Association, reported that Floyd had very little effect on the dive operators. Those that were hit in San Salvador, Eleuthera and Abaco are mostly back in business or were planning to reopen

DIVE BRIEFS



Vroom-Mobile

Flaps down. Flaps up. Left throttle, check. Right throttle, check. I went over the Hydrospeeder controls eagerly, preparing to shove this state-of-the-art scooter off its submerged platform and scream at 6 knots over the Key Largo sand flats. All I needed was some kind of sputtering engine noise and I would have a real *Top Gun* fantasy.

Hydrospeeders are not new, but a recent effort to market these 6-foot 10-inch DPVs to a resort dive market has thrust the name and the product into the public eye. I took a test ride this summer at a newly opened franchise at Atlantis Dive Center in Key Largo, Florida.

An instructor showed me the controls and explained flight school. Pilots attend a classroom session. Then they hop aboard a specially designed dive boat that carries the machines to a sandy area for shallow, confined-water practice. The two-hour PADI course is divided into parts: \$75 for an initial test flight; \$100 more to gain certification at any Hydrospeeder locations, which include Key Largo; Mission Viejo, Ca; Negril, Jamaica; and Cozumel.

The 270-pound Hydrospeeder is equipped with small wings that adjust the bow's attitude. Two aft propellers, controlled by foot throttles and powered by a 36-volt battery system, nudge the craft into banking turns. A buoyancy bladder in the bow offers lift and keel weights adjust the scooter's balance. Pilots wear only a wet suit. A regulator with a long hose is fitted to a standard scuba tank beneath the seat. A bailout pony bottle is strapped to the back of the scooter. For information, contact T-N-T Leasing at 954-967-1142 in Fort Lauderdale or at 949-768-9436 in Mission Viejo, or call Aquatic Temptations in Key Largo at 800-331-DIVE.

—Christine Dummit

around October 1 after cleanup. Of the six-franchised dive operations owned by Watson, only the Walker's Cay location was closed until October 1 due to debris and blown-out windows. Below the



surface, the marine life fared well, with possible damage to the shallow areas around Abaco.

To help the relief effort, check www.bahamas.com. —Heather Callahan



WRECK FACTS

BY ELLSWORTH BOYD

DIVE BRIEFS

What's a Lytle List? ... What about the new Florida artificial reef? ... Is the *Stolt Dagali* still there? ...



Slocum: A Pre-Titanic Disaster

Mike Cardiff of Newark, NJ, asks what happened to the *General Slocum* after it sank near Hell Gate in 1904. Eight years before the *Titanic* disaster that took 1,517 lives, the excursion paddle-wheeler *General Slocum* sank in New York's East River, claiming 1,031 lives. A cookstove exploded midway in a 30-minute journey from New York City's lower east side to North Brother Island.

Hundreds of passengers, most of them families on a picnic cruise sponsored by St. Mark's German Lutheran Church, leaped overboard as the captain continued to steer toward the island. Scores of men, women and children were drowned or crushed by the steamer's churning paddle wheels. Only 300 escaped as the vessel sank off Hunt's Point on the East River.

The burned-out hull, raised by the Merritt, Chapman and Scott Wrecking Company, was towed to a shipyard and converted to a coal barge. The barge, named *Maryland*, was lost eight years later in a storm off Atlantic City, New Jersey.

Ruth Johnson of Cheboygan, MI, is researching an 1800s steamship and asks, "What is the Lytle List?"

The Lytle List is another name for *Merchant Steam Vessels of the United States, 1807-1868*, compiled by William M. Lytle, the deputy commissioner of Navigation, U.S. Department of Commerce, from 1927 to 1932. The original limited edition of 1,000 copies, published by the Steamship Historical Society of America (SSHA), Mystic, Connecticut, 1952, lists 13,000 steam vessels alphabetically in 294 pages. Six categories show when and where the

vessel was built and its first home port, tonnage, rig and disposition.

As supplementary lists were published throughout the years, one became especially popular among wreck researchers: *Losses of United*

States Merchant Steam Vessels, 1790-1868, listing more than 3,000 steamships that either foundered, collided, burned, exploded or ran aground.

Copies of the Lytle List are available in maritime and metropolitan libraries throughout

the United States. For a brochure on how to purchase a reprint of the list, contact Susan Ewen, SSHA, 300 Ray Drive, Suite 4, Providence, RI 02906. Phone: 401-274-0805.

Lowell Baker of Albany, NY, read about the salvage of the *New Jersey* wreck, *Stolt Dagali* and wants to know how much of the wreck remains for divers to explore.

The 582-foot Norwegian tanker was sliced in two when the Israeli luxury liner *SS Shalom* plowed into her port side in a dense fog on Thanksgiving Day, 1964. Nineteen men died as the stern plunged 130 feet to the bottom.

Watertight compartments kept the bow afloat while a U.S.

Glenn Patton of Miami, FL, heard about a new artificial reef off Fort Lauderdale, Florida, and wants to know how deep it is.

The *Tracy*, a 132-foot freighter confiscated for carrying drugs, rests in 70 feet of water. Her upper deck can be explored at 45 feet. A bronze plaque hangs on the wheelhouse, a tribute to local instructor Ken Vitale, who died during a check-out dive. The Broward County Commission is reviewing a proposal to rename the vessel in honor of Vitale. Three other wrecks lie near the *Tracy*: the *J. Scutti*, the *Pride* and the *Merci Jesus*. Members of the Greater Fort Lauderdale Dive Association dive these wrecks regularly. For details, write to GFLDA, PO Box 460216, Fort Lauderdale, FL 33346, or e-mail gfla@aksi.net.

Coast Guard cutter and helicopters rescued the captain and remaining crew. The *Shalom* plucked five men from frigid seas and headed to New York.

Although the *Stolt's* bow was salvaged, a 140-foot piece of her stern remains a popular dive site. The wreck rests on its starboard side in 65 to 130 feet of water, providing divers of all experience levels an opportunity to search for lobsters and artifacts. The engine room, chief engineer's office and other parts of the wreck are penetrable, but thick layers of silt can be a problem. Charter boats run 18 miles to the *Stolt* from Manasquan Inlet, New Jersey, and 36 miles from Debs Inlet, Long Island, New York.

Roy Sutton of Glendale, CA, wants to know what's been salvaged from the *Georgia Straits*,

a tugboat sunk off Long Beach, CA, in 1965.

Divers have salvaged the ship's wheel, binnacle, telegraph, prop, lights and foghorn. The most recent find was the ship's bell, recovered by Phil Bergeron of the California Wreck Divers Club. Resting in 80 feet of water about three miles offshore, the *Georgia Straits'* highest relief is its engine that rises about 10 feet off the bottom. The wooden superstructure has deteriorated, but artifacts still abound on the silty bottom.

Struck by the Mexican tanker *Reynosa* while cruising in a dense fog, the tug's 13 passengers and crew watched in disbelief as the captain backed off and steamed away. Fortunately, two U.S. Coast Guard cutters, the *Morris* and *Minnetonka*, were returning from patrol and responded to the

Georgia Straits' mayday. No one was hurt, but the tugboat sank shortly after the rescuers arrived.

Pete Dunn of Minneapolis, MN, asks via the Net: "Was the *John Jacob Astor*, sunk in Lake Superior in 1844, named after the famous millionaire's great grandfather, a fur-trading magnate in the early 1800s?"

This sounds logical, considering that John Jacob Astor established his American Fur Company at Duluth in 1817. The 78-foot brig, *John Jacob Astor*, was the first documented American total-loss shipwreck on Lake Superior, shattered on the

rocks of Copper Harbor in 1844. She plied the waters off the Keweenaw coast, servicing the outposts of Astor's fur empire.

The vessel's loss was a severe blow to the lake's commerce since she also carried general cargo, missionaries, merchants and explorers. Details can be found in *Keweenaw Shipwrecks* by Fred Stonehouse, Avery Color Studios, Au Train, Michigan; *Lake Superior Shipwrecks* by Julius Wolff Jr., Lake Superior Port Cities, Duluth, Minnesota; and *The 100 Best Great Lakes Shipwrecks, Volume II* by Cris Kohl, Seawolf Communications, West Chicago, Illinois.

Have a Wreck Question?

Send your wreck questions to Ellsworth Boyd, 1120 Bernoudy Rd., White Hall, MD 21161. Be sure to include a self-addressed, stamped envelope for a personal reply. Ellsworth can also be e-mailed at aced@gateway.net.

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RED SEA DIVE-OFF '99 EXPANDS

The second-annual Red Sea Dive-Off held in July at El Gouna, Egypt, combined — for the first time — both team (consisting of three free divers) and individual competitions for men and women. The '99 competition was organized by Divers' Lodge El Gouna and A.I.D.A., the International Association for the Development of Free Diving.

Seventy-eight competitors from 24 countries attended, an increase from only nine competitors last year. The event also attracted some free-diving world-record holders including Loic Leferme (No-Limits saltwater 452 feet), Karoline Meyer Dal Toe (Static apnea — 6 minutes and 2 seconds — which was set at this competition) and Tanya Streeter (constant ballast 220 feet), who was not competing but participated as a safety diver. The United States was represented in the team event, and Brett LeMaster took second place with a dive to 181 feet in the individual constant-weight category.

Athletes competed in three categories: constant weight, static apnea and dynamic apnea. In constant weight, the free diver announces a depth and attempts to swim down to that depth and up again on a single breath, using the same amount of weight for the duration of the dive. Static apnea involves a free diver announcing a certain time and attempting to hold his or her breath, head submerged in the pool for that period. In dynamic apnea, free divers announce a distance and attempt to successfully complete it in the pool on a single breath.

Mathilde Fouchard from France was a bright light at the competition, equaling the men's dynamic apnea distance of 377 feet and capturing a top-three standing in each of the categories. The men's constant-weight

depths ranged from 66 feet to 198 feet (Frederic Buyle of Belgium) and the women's from 76 feet to 132 feet (Karoline Meyer Dal Toe of Brazil). First place for static apnea went to Hubert Maier of Germany with 6 minutes and 32 seconds; standings ranged down to 2 minutes and 26 seconds.

There was also a definite change this year in the attitudes toward the



World-record holder Tanya Streeter acted as a safety diver during the competition.

near blackouts and blackouts that naturally accompany this sport. In some cases, a near blackout meant disqualification, but the judging was not consistent throughout the event. Kirk Krack of the International Association of Free Divers (IAFD) states, "A blackout occurs when a competitor is unconscious and/or is unable to keep his airway above water and should therefore be disqualified. If the situation is otherwise, there should only be a point deduction. — Marnie Lang

Marine MarketPlace

Looking for some new scuba gear or gift ideas for marine enthusiasts? Check out "The Marine MarketPlace, A Nautical Lover's Paradise" exhibition December 3-5 at the Coconut Grove Convention Center in Miami, Florida. Marine products, services and activities such as scuba gear, watercraft, cruises and tours, marine electronics, fishing gear, apparel and more are showcased by more than 500 exhibitors. This year's Marine MarketPlace is dedicated to the West Indian Manatee, and a portion of the proceeds will go to the "Save the Manatee Club." For more information, call 888-488-EXPO.

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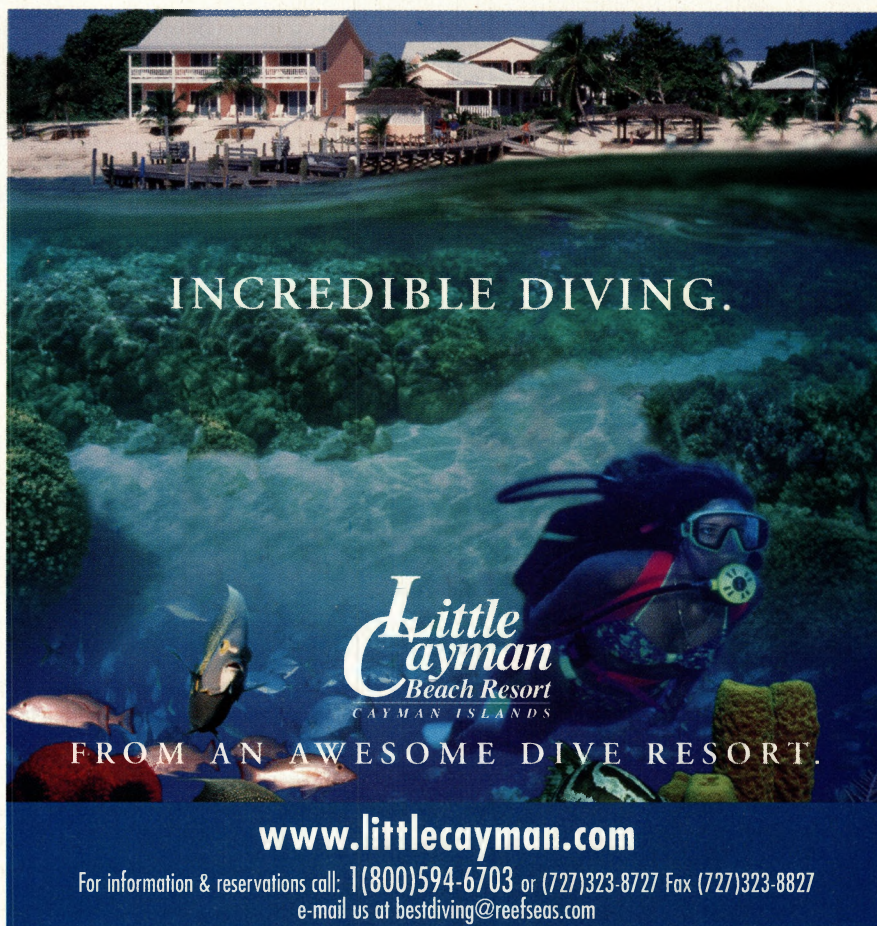
With the recent wave of free diving competitions and national attention drawn to record-breaking attempts, it's only natural to see the trend continue toward free-diving education. Grand Cayman's Divetech is now offering a full slate of courses in breath-hold diving, from basic snorkeling to competitive free-dive training.

Divetech's techniques were developed by Cuban-American free-diving champion Francisco "Pipin" Ferreras. Pipin founded the International Association of Free Divers, which has designed a curriculum for students 12 and older that includes classroom, shallow-water skills and open-water free diving. All courses include instruction, diving, equipment, manuals and certification fees. Options include day clinics or full certification courses.

Divetech's programs are designed to increase a diver's breath-hold range and comfort in the water. From snorkeling and Open Water Free Diver through the Master Free Diver course, students are taught constant ballast diving techniques. The courses develop a detailed understanding of all aspects of deep breath-hold diving, including history, physics, physiology, psychological factors, breathing techniques and emergency procedures, along with skills and free-diving experience along Grand Cayman's walls.

Prices begin at \$100 for a half-day Snorkel/Skin Diver course highlighting surface-snorkeling techniques, and \$200 for a full-day Open Water Free Diver certification featuring breath-hold dives to 33 feet. Advanced and Master ratings are available for those who wish to dive deeper, and dive professionals such as instructors can learn to teach free-diving techniques through Divetech's IAFD instructors.

For more information about Divetech and breath-hold diving classes, call 345-949-1700; Web: www.divetech.com; e-mail: dive tech@candw.ky. — Christine Dummit



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R.E.E.F. REPORT

Snapper numbers growing in Keys sanctuary.
Northwest Florida field station thrives.

Wine Maker Bottles REEF

Wine aficionados take heart; your next bottle of wine may be helping to save the REEF. Wine maker Doug Welsch, president of Fenn Valley Vineyards in Michigan, has designed a special reef label for his vintage wines. A portion of the proceeds from the reef series will be donated to REEF to help in education and data-gathering programs. Doug, an active diver, underwater photographer and marine life enthusiast, announced the program and unveiled the new labels this summer. For more information on Fenn Valley Vineyards and to order your next reef series bottle, visit the Fenn Valley Web site at www.fennvalley.com, or call 616-561-2396.

DIVERS OUTLET OFFERS "ANY-DAY" FISH ID COURSES

Divers Outlet in Key Largo is now offering the PADI Project AWARE Fish Identification Specialty course on request to visiting divers and snorkelers. The course involves a two-hour slide seminar followed by two REEF fish survey dives in the Key Largo National Marine Sanctuary.

To facilitate the course offering, Divers Outlet staff completed a full-day REEF workshop on teaching the course and conducting surveys. Divers Outlet has been a REEF supporter since 1996, donating office space, equipment and support for fish-watching programs. For more information or to schedule a fish ID course, call Divers Outlet at 305-451-0815.



PAUL HUMANN

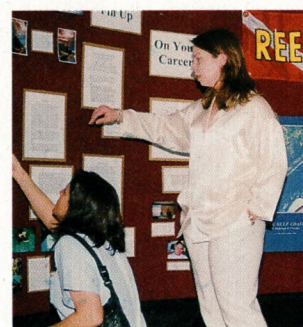
DATA SHOWS SNAPPER INCREASE IN SANCTUARY

Dr. Christy Semmens, REEF Scientific Coordinator, recently compiled data on three species of snapper in the Florida Keys National Marine Sanctuary. Comparisons of two sites in the lower keys, showed increases in gray, yellowtail and school-master snappers in the no-take area of Western Sambos, while decreases were shown for all three

species in the adjacent, unprotected Middle Sambos site.

Data compared relative abundance and sighting frequency before and after the sanctuary no-takes zones were established. Additional comparisons using REEF data will continue to track changes through future years.

DOWDY RUNNING REEF STATION OUT OF FLORIDA'S PANHANDLE



Danielle Dowdy, a University of West Florida marine biology student, heads the REEF Field Station of Northwest Florida. Since its founding in March, the field station has achieved a number of notable accomplishments, including a series of REEF Fish ID classes throughout the Florida panhandle to New Orleans, and comprehensive Great American Fish Count activities in July.

For that event, Danielle

worked out sponsorships with local dive shops who generously offered specials on rentals, free airfills and even discounted dive charters to GAFC participants. These educational efforts have added more than 50 new members to the REEF ranks, who are now providing valuable data from a multitude of new sites.

Agencies ranging from Escambia County to the Department of the Interior's Minerals Management Service are increasingly excited by the prospect of this data becoming available and have embraced the

program wholeheartedly. The field station continues to conduct surveys and classes and will soon begin regular monthly meetings to share information and experiences. Future goals include counting fish at some of the many petroleum platforms off the Louisiana coast, a vast and rich environment that has never been surveyed, as well as constantly expanding Florida efforts. If you will be in the area and would like to participate, contact the REEF Field Station of Northwest Florida at 850-456-9793, REEFNWFL@aol.com or visit the Web site at <http://hometown.aol.com/reefnwfl>.

HOW TO CONTACT REEF



Reef Environmental Education Foundation,
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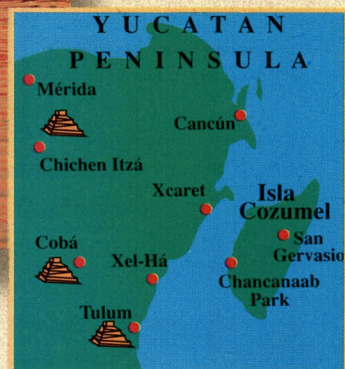
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The Self-Sufficient Buddy

Honing Self-Rescue Skills to a Fine Edge

Take a moment and think back on some of the skills that you accomplished during your first few dives. Regulator recovery, mask clearing, weight-belt handling, buoyancy control and the controlled emergency swimming ascent, for example, readily come to mind. Many of these skills, and all of those just listed, relate directly to self-rescue: Someone kicks the regulator out of your mouth? Recover it and stick it back in. Laugh too hard and flood your mask? Clear it. Something wrong with your BCD? If you're on the surface, ditch your weight belt. Simply save yourself.

Try now to remember how you felt just before your first open-water dive. Chances are that you were dealing with an element of stress. What happened as you became comfortable with the skills just mentioned? If you're like most, the

The three P's of diving — preparation, prevention, and performance — not only fine-tune your self-rescue skills, but also make you a better buddy.

AMOS NACHOUM



MICHELLE WESTMORLAND

EQUIPMENT PREP

PREPARATION also includes equipment. Have you all the appropriate equipment for the particular dive? Is it in good condition and recently serviced? Is it adjusted for fit and streamlined to avoid excessive drag and the risk of snagging? Are you properly weighted? Involve your buddies in your preparation and get involved with theirs. Diving is always better when no one has a problem.



stress level dropped as your ability to perform these skills increased. And that's the way it should be.

Now consider for a moment what might seem to be a bit of a contradiction: Another major part of becoming a qualified diver is becoming a good buddy. Never dive alone. Plan your dive, and dive your plan with your buddy.

Isn't it interesting that the best buddies are frequently the most self-reliant divers? These divers have developed and honed self-rescue skills to a fine edge. They can recognize and manage stress. They can help themselves. And before you can help anyone else, before you can be a really great buddy, you need to be able to look after yourself. To do that, let's look at a few concepts from the PADI Rescue Diver course that are actually introduced during entry-level training. I present for your perusal the three "P's."

Preparation: Self-rescue begins with preparation. You need to be ready physically and mentally for your planned dives. Physical preparation, obviously, involves fitness, health, rest and diet. You can take this as far as you want to go, but no matter who you are and what you do, you know when you're rested and healthy. You probably also have some idea of your personal physical limits. Pay attention to these factors and plan dives within your capability.

Mental preparation means feeling confident — but not overly so — about the dive you're about to make. This is a little harder to describe, but you've just got to "feel good" about the planned dive. A few examples illustrate: Is the tax man on your back? Are you in the middle of a particularly trying court case? Did your dog just die? These circumstances may make it difficult for you to concentrate on the dive at hand. Or they may be just the excuse you need to get away from it all. The point is that only you can make that call.

Preparation also includes equipment. Have you all the appropriate equipment for the particular dive? Is it in good condition and recently serviced? Is it adjusted for fit and streamlined to avoid exces-



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sive drag and the risk of snagging? Are you properly weighted? Involve your buddies in your preparation and get involved with theirs. Diving is always better when no one has a problem.

Continuing the "P" theme, consider next: Prevention. The ideal situation is to never allow problems to occur. This way, you never have to deal with them. Try to think ahead and anticipate potential problems. Are you more active than usual, perhaps kick-

ing against a mild current? You'll probably use more air. So keep an extra eye on your pressure gauge and factor increased air consumption into the dive plan.

Is this your first dive on a vertical wall? Make sure you are weighted correctly. Pay close attention to buoyancy control from the moment you enter the water. Watch your depth gauge as you descend and level off well above your planned maximum depth. The goal here is to prevent damaging the

wall by leaving claw marks behind as you make a vain attempt to control descent rate using the fingernail method.

Is this your first time diving with a new buddy? Take a little extra care with your pre-dive checks. Get to know

TWO MORE P's

PREVENTION:

The ideal situation is to never allow problems to occur. This way, you never have to deal with them. Try to think ahead and anticipate potential problems.

PERFORMANCE:

No matter what the problem, the first thing to do is stop all activity. Next, re-establish a normal breathing pattern. Third, think about all possible actions. Finally, act, and implement your plan. Stop, breathe, think and act.

your new buddy as best you can in the time you have before the dive. Remember that this is an opportunity to make friends; try not to rattle off a string of questions that sounds like an inquisition. Make sure to review communications and what to do in case of buddy separation.

Another "P" thing, from a self-rescue perspective, is Performance. Sometimes, in spite of all attempts at preparation and prevention, a problem crops up. No matter what the problem, the first thing to do is take a moment and stop all activity. Next, re-establish a normal breathing pattern. Third, think about all possible actions (establishing positive buoyancy is likely to be way up on this list). Finally, act, and implement your plan. Remember this from your first scuba course? "Stop, breathe, think and act." Important concepts don't change as you get more experienced; they just get fleshed out a little more.

That is one of the strongest reasons I know for continuing education, in this case a rescue course. Once you've built a little confidence and experience, take the time to be a better buddy. As you do, you'll be pleased to see how much better you get at taking care of yourself. ▀

John Kinsella is PADI America's director of training and quality management.

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The ability to control one's breathing rate and reaction to stress is an important part of any technical dive and decompression plan.

Recently, I was asked to speak to a group of technical divers on the subject of free diving. An audience survey revealed that many of these highly experienced divers gave little or no thought to breath control, and few practiced any form of breath-hold diving.

"I only dive in caves, and you can't do that without tanks," one man commented.

"True," I replied, "but what happens in an out-of-air emergency that requires you to swim to your buddy before sharing air. And what about the times you pause to adjust a faulty regulator or shut down a malfunctioning regulator and switch to an alternative air supply? Wouldn't it be comforting to know that you could function for a minute or more without a breath"?

In emergency situations, breath control is even more important than breath-holding ability. The rule of thirds that every technical diver is taught works on the assumption that both divers will be able to maintain their pre-emergency breathing while air sharing — which is not always the case.

Years ago, my first cave-diving partner experienced a minor regulator problem some 2,000 feet from the cave entrance. This event apparently triggered fear, which escalated to a state of

ANGEL FRANK FERNANDEZ

Mind Over Muscle

Looking for a simple breath-control exercise that will carry over to diving? Here's one that tech guru Tom Mount shared with me years ago:

Using a treadmill, stationary bike, stair-climbing machine or what have you, establish a sustainable exercise pace. Once you have your pace and breathing under control, increase the intensity of the exercise for a period of one minute, and at the same time, focus on maintaining your original breathing rate.

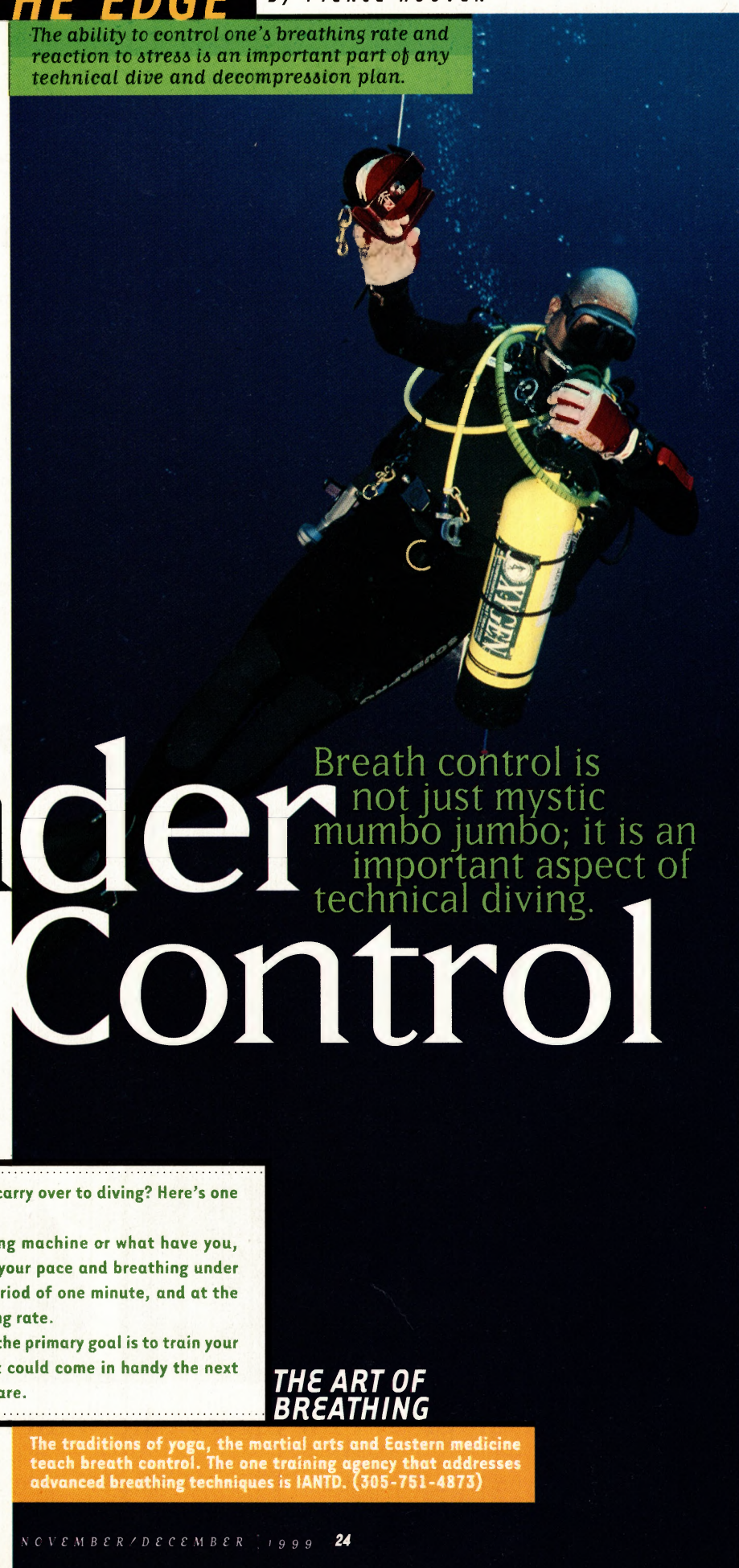
There are some physical benefits to this drill, but the primary goal is to train your mind to retain control of the breath — something that could come in handy the next time you have a long way to swim without any air to spare.

Breath control is not just mystic mumbo jumbo; it is an important aspect of technical diving.

Under Control

THE ART OF BREATHING

The traditions of yoga, the martial arts and Eastern medicine teach breath control. The one training agency that addresses advanced breathing techniques is IANTD. (305-751-4873)



near panic and sent his breathing rate skyrocketing. By the time I noticed his deteriorating mental condition and took steps to calm him, he had nearly emptied his tanks. Had we not been able to get his breathing under control, the air reserves left in my tanks would not have been sufficient to get us both out of the cave.

It has been proven time and again that one can control the mind by controlling the breath. For this reason, numerous martial arts, holistic medical traditions and spiritual orders incorporate breath control into their teachings. Such associations, unfortunately, cause some otherwise skilled technical divers to downplay any form of breathing or visualization exercises as "mystic mumbo jumbo," which they feel has nothing to do with "real-world" diving.

At the upper end of the sport, however, the best technical divers all practice some type of mind and breath control — even if they don't recognize or identify it as such. I would encourage anyone who is moving into more advanced forms of diving to become aware of the mental aspects of the sport and the power and importance of breath control.

REBREATHER REBUTTAL

After reading my review of the Halcyon rebreather, long-time contributor and IANTD president Tom Mount felt compelled to share his own views on the subject:

In your recent article, "The Reality Rebreather" (Aug. 1999), you state: "Few explorers are willing to grant total life-support dependency to a complex collection of microelectronics."

I own both a Halcyon and a Cis Lunar MK 5, and I am very familiar with the safety issues involved with both closed-circuit rebreathers (CCR) and semi-closed-circuit rebreather (SCR) systems.

One of the Halcyon's biggest advantages is its ease of transition from open-circuit diving to rebreather diving. In this aspect, the Halcyon is indeed simple. As a SCR, it is extremely efficient, and it will maintain a consistent and predictable Fo2 even under varying workloads. The Halcyon creates no additional risk of oxygen toxic-

ity as compared to open-circuit, and hypoxia is less probable than on a conventional SCR or CCR unit.

However, I disagree with your implication that CCR systems place a total dependency on electronics. Most CCR units allow for bailout procedure to semi-closed mode — even when oxygen sensors and electronics are lost. I'm not implying they do not have risk because they do. In fact, ALL rebreathers have risk specific to the individual units. But just as open-circuit diving has risk that by and large may be con-

trolled through understanding of the systems and training, the same is true of both SCR and CCR diving.

Overall, there is much greater acceptance of CCR systems by explorers and technical divers of CCR units than what your article implied.

By my count, some 40 Halcyon units are now in service, most owned by WKPP members and used for exploration of Wakulla and Leon Sinks. So, yes, the Halcyon is used in extensive exploration and has an excellent track record, including the

I don't know anything about f-stops or shutter speeds. And I don't care. I just want to take a picture.



Photo: Cathy Church



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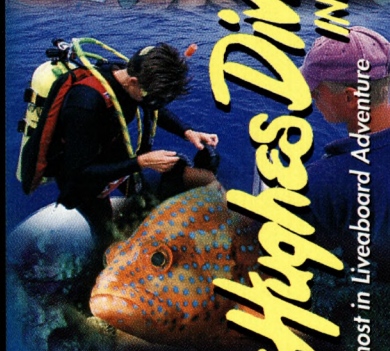
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First and Foremost in Liveboard Adventure

Photography: Christopher Frink, Rick Fritzsche

present distance penetration in a cave.

By contrast, the Cis Lunar MK 5P now has 81 owners and is used in wrecks and cave exploration as well as deep-water research dives to depths greater than 400 feet.

The MK15.5 and the entire series of this military unit and modified units — the GE MK 10, CCR 1000, MK16 — are quite popular with filmmakers and photographers. Rob Palmer used early members of this family on Blue Hole explorations in the late 1970s and 80s.

The Bio Marine 500 has been used in film production and also in wreck exploration and cave diving by Darrel Ortel and others. More than 300 units of the Inspiration are on the market and are being used for deep wreck exploration and in caves. Mike Fowler of South Africa uses his to explore deep mines, and Paul Neilsen has numerous Inspiration dives below 300 feet in the South Pacific. Both men also own Halcyons.

Treasure hunting teams lead by Billy Deans and Kevin Gurr have logged hundreds of hours on the SM1600. They chose these

CCR units because they felt they were safe and simple to manage, and provided excellent decompression advantages.

Due to their smaller size, all of these CCR units are more adaptable for wreck penetration and diving in smaller caves than is the Halcyon.

The final point I want to make is that all rebreathers should be treated with respect, and none should be assumed to be failsafe or "the best." Anyone in the market for a rebreather should analyze their needs and determine if a rebreather will provide clear advantages over open circuit. Next, they need to determine the specific system best suited for their needs based on a careful study of the facts.

Point taken, Tom. There may come a time when I feel more at ease when performing expedition type diving on a fully closed system. At present, I have developed a level of comfort and control on the Halcyon that I have yet to experience on the more complex units.

U.S. NATIONAL SPEARFISHING CHAMPIONSHIPS

Pepin Fernandez stood on a dock in the Florida Keys this summer draining ice from a fish cooler. Moments before, he and his Beuchat teammates had weighed in enough snapper and grouper and assorted reef fish to claim third place in the U.S. National Spearfishing Championships in Islamorada. But Fernandez couldn't celebrate. Teammate Tony Miranda was undergoing surgery on his leg to repair a propeller slash suffered just hours earlier.

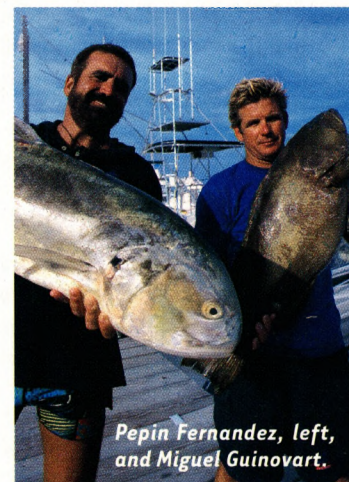
Fernandez could hardly talk about stalking techniques or where to hunt big fish. He kept hammering home another message: safety. He talked about Tony's accident. A boat hit him as he surfaced in traffic over a reef. The prop cut into his ankle. Surgery will repair it, but therapy will be needed before Miranda can free dive again.

"Your body is first, the fish is second," said Fernandez, who at 51 has more than 40 years of experience free diving and spearfishing. "You must fish together and communicate with the boat where each other is at."

Fernandez and the Beuchat team, which included fellow Cuban natives Miranda and Miguel "Mojarra" Guinovart, were heavily favored heading into the national meet on July 30 out of Robbie's Marine. The team — all members of the Miami Freedivers, which hosted the event — has fished Islamorada regularly for years. However, Miranda's injury at 2 p.m. during the contest limited their take. Another south Florida team — The Mullet Heads — placed second, and first place went to an impressive Hawaiian team.

The Hawaiians — Wendell Ko, Gene Higa and Wayne Hayashi — weighed in a total of 50 fish for a team-high 258.125 points. Hayashi took the top individual prize, weighing in 20 fish for the one-day event.

Among the 24 teams who signed up for the competition, two were female partnerships. Beuchat's female team — Paige Latterner and Vicky Harris of Miami — won that division with 10 fish and 23.5 points.



Pepin Fernandez, left, and Miguel Guinovart.

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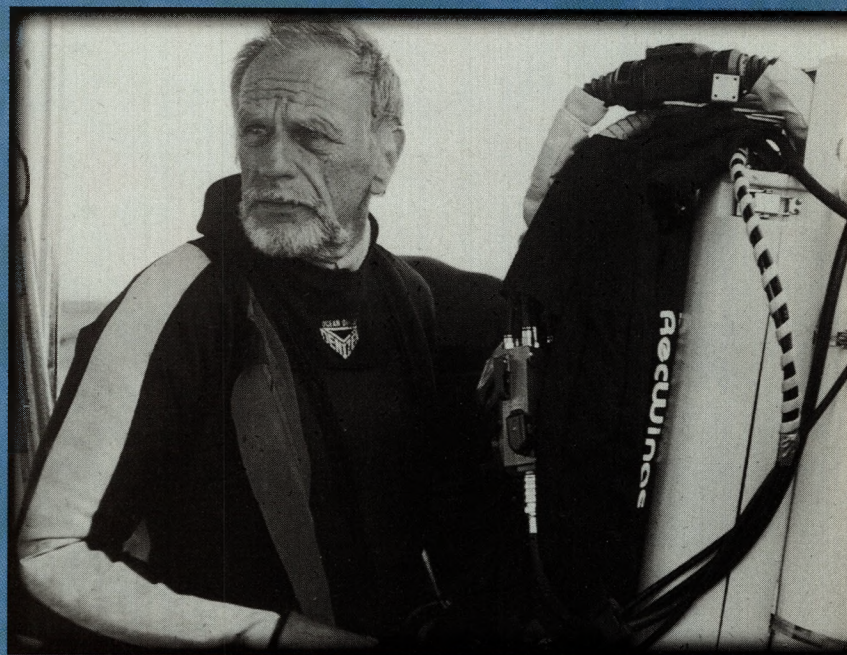
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GBT = Gas Blender Training



Capturing the true colors of your underwater subjects can be a challenge. Here are seven color-enhancing tips to lighten up your shots.

Show Me the Color

How to Avoid Underwater Washout

It's a fact: no other place on planet ocean is as colorful as the coral reef. This ecosystem is literally bursting with the vibrant colors of corals and fishes — and an occasional diver in a bright yellow-and-pink wetsuit.

The challenge for underwater photographers is capturing all this color on film. Here are seven tips to help you meet the challenge.

1) DIVE SHALLOW. Water filters out color selectively, beginning at about 10 feet. As you dive deeper, you lose colors in this order: red (10 feet), orange (20 feet), yellow (50 feet), green (50 feet) and blue (150 feet). All depths are approximate; precise depths depends on time of day, water clarity and weather conditions.

So, when shooting natural-light pictures, dive shallow. In addition, dive between 10 a.m. and 2 p.m., when sunlight has maximum water penetration.

2) SHOOT CLOSE. Water is about 800 times denser than air. As camera-to-subject distance increases, the sharpness and the color of your subject decrease. For natural light pictures of reefs and divers, a wide-angle lens lets you get up-close and personal with your subject. For optimum results, use a 12-mm, 13-mm, 18-mm or 15-

Above: Nikonos RS, 13-mm lens, dual Sea&Sea YS120 strobes, Kodak Elite chrome 100 film. At right: Nikonos V, Sea&Sea 15-mm lens, Sea&Sea YS120 strobes, Kodak Elite chrome 100.

QUESTIONS?

Have a question for Rick? E-mail him at RickSammon@aol.com. Also, check out his Web site: www.ricksammon.com.

SHOOT CLOSE

Water is about 800 times denser than air. As camera-to-subject distance increases, the sharpness and the color of your subject decrease. For natural light pictures of reefs and divers, a wide-angle lens lets you get up-close and personal with your subject. For optimum results, use a 12-mm, 13-mm, 18-mm or 15-mm lens. The wider the lens (a 12-mm lens is wider than a 15-mm lens), the closer you can get to your subject.



RICK SAMMON

mm lens. The wider the lens (a 12-mm lens is wider than a 15-mm lens), the closer you can get to your subject.

3) USE A STROBE. A strobe can show the true color of a subject. Notice that I said "can show" and not "does show." Here's why: If your subject is beyond the range of the strobe, your subject will not only be too dark, but it will also be off color. When framing a fish, diver or reef scene, be sure to check the subject-to-flash distance, and be sure that it's within flash range. If it's not, move in (or zoom in) closer.

Rule of thumb: As the price, size and weight of a strobe increases, so does its maximum flash distance. (I can tell you where the expression "rule of thumb" comes from if you are interested; just e-mail me at RickSammon@aol.com).

4) CHOOSE YOUR SLIDE FILM CAREFULLY. Want to show the true color of some exotic species of fish as well as its surrounding habitat? Then use Kodachrome 64 slide, known for its accurate color rendition of a subject.

If you are after pictures with vibrant and enhanced colors, however, then choose one of the new extra-color slide films, which produce images with saturated and warmer colors.

Another tip: Try underexposing your slide film by 1/4 stop for increased color saturation. Example: expose ISO 50 film at ISO 75, 100 film at ISO 125, etc.

5) IMPROVING POOR PRINTS. Got dull prints? Well, there's a chance that your lab did not do its best job. Take your questionable prints and negs back, and ask for a remake (most labs do this at no charge). In most cases, the lab can deliver a darker, lighter or more saturated set of prints.

6) DIVE INTO THE DIGITAL DARKROOM. Digital imaging programs like Adobe Photo Deluxe and Adobe Photoshop make it easy for you to improve, enhance and manipulate the color of your picture — or an individual subject in a picture — in the digital darkroom (your computer, imaging program and printer).

How do you get your pictures into your computer? Well, you can scan them yourself, have them scanned by a pro lab or, if you shoot prints, order a Picture CD when you send in your film for developing.

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7) LOOK FOR COLOR. My last tip is actually the most obvious one: look for colorful subjects! A picture of a yellow butterflyfish will have more color than a picture of a flounder blending in perfectly with white sand. Think and compose for color!

As always, please remember: Take only pictures, leave only bubbles ... and only touch your shutter-release

button, not the fragile corals.

Rick Sammon's colorful pictures can be seen in his 20 books, on his Web site: www.ricksammon.com, and on the Web site for his conservation organization, CEDAM International: www.cedam.org.

You can catch Rick live (on tape) on ESPN's Canon Photo Safari on Saturday mornings in the fall.

IKELITE DIGITAL EXPOSURE METER

BY CHRIS CRUMLEY

(Note: Wes Skiles' video column will return next issue.)

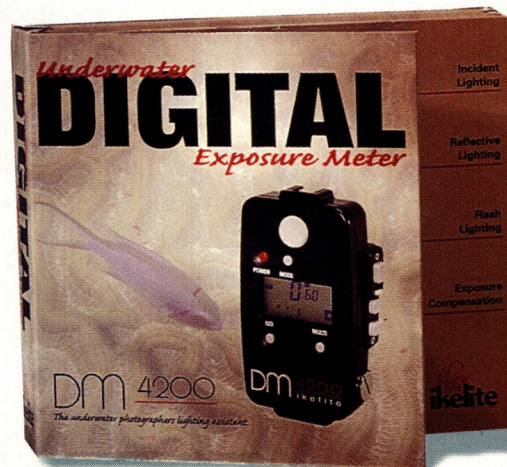
Underwater exposure meters have been around for years. They've been essential to measure ambient and other continuous light for non-automated cameras — still and motion pictures.

During all this time, the Sekonic Marine Meter has been the undisputed king of the meter-hill and is still widely used. But, as good as it is, the Marine Meter doesn't measure strobe light.

In the early '90s, a Michigan company produced a housing for the Minolta IV-F, a flash and ambient meter used by many photographers for studio and location work. Aqua Vision Systems quickly acquired the rights to the housing, made some improvements and called it the Aquameter. This was perhaps the first widely available solution to measuring both ambient and strobe light underwater.

Now there is a new kid on the block. Ikelite's new Digital Exposure Meter is small and mounts to a variety of cameras, housings and strobe arms or on a lanyard attached to the photographer. It measures both reflected and incident light — ambient and flash. Air tests were "dead-on."

We then took it to the pool, to the Bahamas and to 200 fsw in Chuuk/Truk Lagoon to see how it stacked up.



Take one out of the box, watch the start-up battery check of the single AA battery on the display screen, set the film ISO and get it wet. It is slightly positive — something I found offensive at first — but mounting it to a strobe arm eliminates that concern. Or, tie a brass clip to the lanyard to get it negative.


Measuring light using the incident light metering is a good way to go for wet topside settings and land photography. Underwater, however, most photographers will probably prefer using the reflected light setting (this accounts for all the distance the light has to travel and the turbidity.)

Checking ambient light falling on the background water column, set the metering Mode to ambient, turn the Incident/Reflected dial to "R," point the meter cell toward the background water column and click the meter. Simple and

accurate. The aperture for your selected shutter speed is displayed in large numbers on the digital display. Even divers with old eyes will have no problem reading the display.

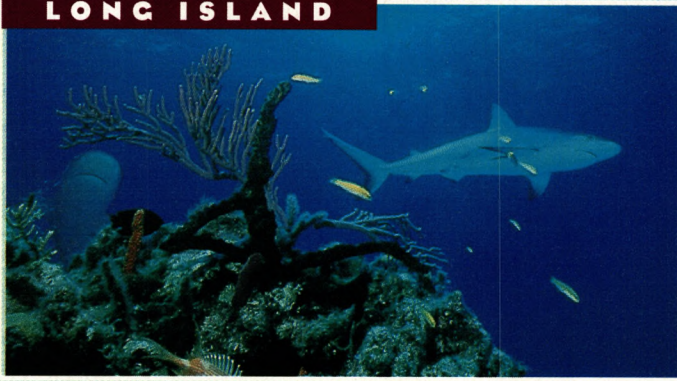
To determine flash output, aim the meter at the subject (something on the subject that is midtone; about 18 percent gray) and fire the strobe; the aperture needed will be displayed. Easy! Checking a camera's TTL operation is also painless. Take a picture with the meter placed to read the light. If TTL is working properly, the meter reading should agree with the camera aperture.

The meter can measure multi-flash pops for creativity, automatically shuts off after five minutes, locks "on" for continuous reading of ambient light and has an adjustment for meter compensation.

After all this, here are two words for the meter: "dead-on." 

The Out Islands of the Bahamas

LONG ISLAND



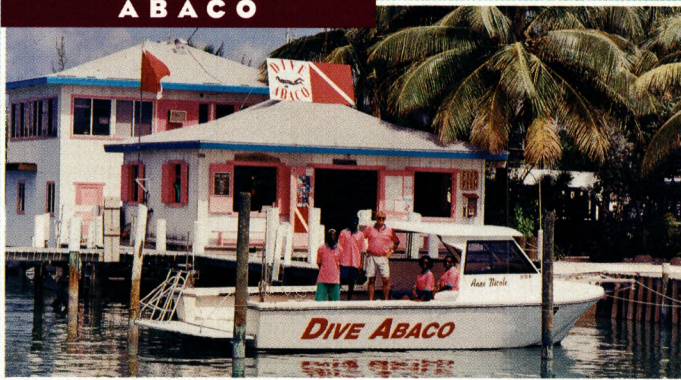
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ABYSS PRO KEVLAR TX

FEATURED SUIT: Abyss Pro Kevlar TX

MATERIAL: Kevlar-coated neoprene

THICKNESS: 2 mm

SEALS: Neoprene or latex

OPTIONS/FEATURES: Zippers, flap, Apek valve, hood, bag, convertible zip and pockets available.

COST/PRICE: \$2300 retail

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Other Products/Services

Type: neoprene (2, 4, 6.5 mm), crushed neoprene **Seals:** latex, neoprene (polymer sealed) **Custom Sizing:** yes **Warranty:** yes **Number of valves:** 2 intake and exhaust Apek valves. **Number of vents and locations:** N/A **Options:** 9 different models, various colors, rear entry, 2-mm/4-mm/6.5-mm suits.

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FEATURED SUIT: EXP-100

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Type: neoprene **Seals:** latex, neoprene **Custom Sizing:** yes **Warranty:** yes **Number of valves:** 2 **Number of vents and locations:** placement is optional **Options:** 30 total options, various colors, types of wrist seals, etc.

APOLLO



4.5 EX DRYSUIT

FEATURED SUIT: 4.5 EX Drysuit

MATERIAL: Microcell neoprene

THICKNESS: 4.5 mm

SEALS: Latex

OPTIONS/FEATURES: Foot valves, ankle weights.

COST/PRICE: \$799.95

CONTACT: 800-231-0909; www.apollosort-susa.com

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Type: microcell neoprene **Seals:** 2nd skin latex **Custom Sizing:** no **Warranty:** yes **Number of valves:** 1 **Number of vents and locations:** 2 outside ankle of boot and left shoulder.

ANDY'S TYPHOON



DS-3 DRYSUIT

FEATURED SUIT: DS-3 Drysuit

MATERIAL: Tri-Laminate

THICKNESS: N/A

SEALS: Latex - double dipped

OPTIONS/FEATURES: Exhaust placement optional, neoprene seals available

COST/PRICE: \$1300

CONTACT: 410-957-4414

Other Products/Services

Type: tri-laminate **Seals:** latex, neoprene available **Custom Sizing:** yes **Warranty:** yes **Number of Valves:** 2 **Number of vents and locations:** intake at center of chest, exhaust **Options:** various colors.



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THICKNESS: Lower body: 3-mm crushed
SEALS: Latex or neoprene
OPTIONS/FEATURES: Self-entry or shoulder entry
COST/PRICE: Standard size: \$1,201, Custom size: \$1,286
CONTACT: 250-652-8554; www.whitescold-water.com

Other Products/Services

Type: tri-laminate, neoprene, crushed neoprene **Seals:** latex, neoprene **Custom Sizing:** yes **Warranty:** yes **Number of valves:** 2 **Number of vents and locations:** inflate: center chest, exhaust at bicep or wrist. **Options:** Bilam colors are blue, black, red, gold. Trilam color is black.

HENDERSON



ARCTIC DRY II

FEATURED SUIT: Arctic Dry II, men and women's styles
MATERIAL: Neoprene
THICKNESS: 7 mm
SEALS: Gold Core wrist/Rubatex(r) 6231 Neck
OPTIONS/FEATURES: Talon(r) dry zip, SI-tech valves, Tufskin lower legs, Tuftrac boot
COST/PRICE: \$749
CONTACT: 800-222-0347

Other Products/Services

Type: neoprene **Seals:** Gold Core neoprene **Custom Sizing:** yes **Warranty:** yes **Number of valves:** LP chest, SI-tech brand **Number of vents and locations:** exhaust shoulder, SI-tech brand.

Drysuit 101

Drysuit diving isn't particularly difficult, but most first-timers will feel more comfortable going dry with the help of an instructor. The major training agencies offer drysuit specialties, and you might also want to read the book *Dry Suit Diving — A Guide to Diving Dry*, by Barsky, Long & Stinton, or check out one of the instructional videos offered by DUI (800-325-8439, www.dui-online.com).

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VALVE

DRY ZIPPER

WRIST SEAL



DIVING UNLIMITED



DUI SIGNATURE SERIES

FEATURED SUIT: DUI Signature Series**MATERIAL:** Patented CF200 Material**THICKNESS:** 3/32"**SEALS:** Latex or neoprene**OPTIONS/FEATURES:** Made-to-measure.

Choice of colors. Self-don diagonal torso zipper with telescoping torso, suspenders, and crotch strap. Integrated neck collar and zipper guard. Kevlar kneepads, SI-5 Glove System. DUI's Rock Boot System. Embroidered DUI Warm Neck Hood.

COST/PRICE: \$2798**CONTACT:** 800-325-8439; www.dui-online.com

Other Products/Services

Type: tri-laminate, crushed neoprene**Seals:** latex, neoprene on request**Custom Sizing:** yes on certain models**Warranty:** yes**Number of valves:** 2 inlet and exhaust**Number of vents and locations:** N/A**Options:** various colors, wrist and neck seals, add ons, hood, divewear.

VIKING



PRO 1000 SURVEYOR

FEATURED SUIT: Pro 1000 Surveyor**MATERIAL:** Vulcanized Rubber**THICKNESS:** 1000 bm/m2**SEALS:** Latex**OPTIONS/FEATURES:** Optional latex, neoprene or vulcanized rubber hood. Features listed below.**COST/PRICE:** \$1800**CONTACT:** 800-344-4458

Other Products/Services

Type: vulcanized rubber, polyurethane**Seals:** latex**Custom Sizing:** yes**Warranty:** yes**Number of valves:** 2**Number of vents and locations:** N/A**Options:** red/black and all black, vulcanized and RF welded seams, front and rear entry, relief zippers, suspender system, dry glove ring systems with field changeable wrist seals, swivel SI Tech inflator valve, automatic adjustable exhaust valve, fin tabs on boots.

USA1



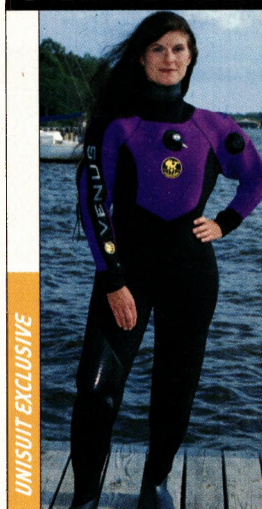
USA1 AQUALITE

FEATURED SUIT: Aqualite Diving System**MATERIAL:** 200 series high-tenacity urethane coated nylon**THICKNESS:** N/A**SEALS:** Latex**OPTIONS/FEATURES:** Soft-soled boots with cuff protectors, variable volume adjustable exhaust valve, matching Exotherm II undergarment, LP hose, maintenance kit, 25-year warranty against seam leaks from mfg. defects, various colors.**COST/PRICE:** \$995**CONTACT:** 503-366-0212; www.usia.com

Other Products/Services

Type: tri-laminate**Seals:** latex, neoprene**Custom Sizing:** yes**Warranty:** yes**Number of valves:** 2 intake and exhaust**Number of vents and locations:** 2 inlet in center of chest, exhaust on left upper arm, custom placement available.**Options:** front/rear entry, relief zipper, pockets, thigh/seat protection, etc.

SEARIOUS FUN/POSEIDON



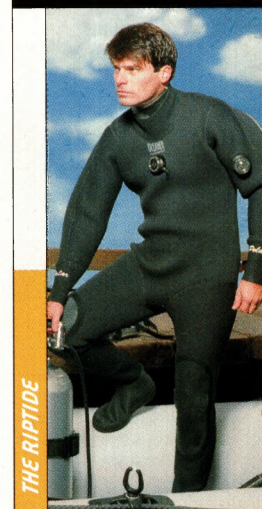
UNISUIT EXCLUSIVE

FEATURED SUIT: Unisuit Exclusive**MATERIAL:** Specially developed neoprene rubber made for this suit**THICKNESS:** 7 mm on suit and boots, 3-mm hood and neck seal**SEALS:** Neoprene**OPTIONS/FEATURES:** Variable volume exhaust available, no undergarment needed. 3 color schemes with reflective yellow panel on hood, self-donning, Poseidon inflator, seams sewn inside and outside, unique 3-mm neoprene wrist cuff system, 7-mm fully insulated attached boots, tested and recommended by NEDU.**COST/PRICE:** \$1500**CONTACT:** 516-231-4475

Other Products/Services

Type: neoprene**Seals:** neoprene**Custom Sizing:** yes**Warranty:** yes**Number of valves:** 2 inlet and exhaust**Number of vents and locations:** exhaust on upper left arm**Options:** same as above.

OCEANER SPORTING GOODS



THE RIPTIDE

FEATURED SUIT: The Riptide**MATERIAL:** Heavy duty Millennium Weave**THICKNESS:** 3-mm high-density G231 N**SEALS:** 3-mm nylon/skin "tuck" Rubatex**G231N neck and "push" wrist seals, 3-mm cold-water collar.****OPTIONS/FEATURES:** Glued, strobil stitched seams. DSV inlet, adjustable outlet with inflation hose. 3- or 7-mm hood.**COST/PRICE:** \$1260**CONTACT:** 604-273-0030;www.oceaner.com.

Other Products/Services

Type: neoprene**Seals:** latex, neoprene**Custom Sizing:** yes**Warranty:** yes**Number of valves:** 2**Number of vents and locations:** center chest, left bicep, optional placement with custom orders**Options:** back entry cross shoulder zippers, 8 sizes of boots, vulcanized or Kevlar kneepads, Extreme Package.

NORTHERN DIVER/ULTIMATE DIVING



CNX 200

FEATURED SUIT: CNX 200
MATERIAL: Highly compressed
THICKNESS: 2 mm
SEALS: Neoprene or latex
OPTIONS/FEATURES: Back/front entry, kevlar kneepads, knife/standard pockets, BDM zipper. Choice of valves.
COST/PRICE: Custom: front entry \$1,740/back entry \$1,710. Stock: Front/Back Entry \$1,600.
CONTACT: 630-262-3801; www.ultimate-diving.com

Other Products/Services

Type: tri-laminate, neoprene, crushed neoprene **Seals:** latex, neoprene **Custom Sizing:** yes **Warranty:** yes **Number of valves:** standard push button **Number of vents and locations:** 2 variable exhaust or auto cuff dump, 7 locations. **Options:** seams are glued, taped and stitched, front or rear entry, various colors. All suits come with bag, lube, hood and inflator hose.

DIVING CONCEPTS



PINNACLE 200 DRYSUIT

FEATURED SUIT: Pinnacle 200 Drysuit
MATERIAL: Compressed neoprene
THICKNESS: 2 mm
SEALS: Latex or neoprene seals
OPTIONS/FEATURES: Custom/stock sizes, colors, front/back entry, reflective tape, Kevlar/Quartz/Cordura kneepads, wet hood, triple-glued/polymer sealed seams.
COST/PRICE: \$1750
CONTACT: 805-692-2001

Other Products/Services

Type: stretch tri-laminate UltraFlex Pro, neoprene (6.5 mm), crushed neoprene (2 mm/4 mm) **Seals:** latex, neoprene **Custom Sizing:** yes **Warranty:** yes **Number of valves:** 2 Apek swivel inflate/variable exhaust or cuff dump **Number of vents and locations:** 1, bicep/forearm, cuff dump on forearm **Options:** colors, seams, entry, wrist ring system, p-valve, pockets.

BARE SPORTSWEAR CORP.



COMMERCIAL TRILAMINATE

FEATURED SUIT: Commercial Trilaminate
MATERIAL: Butyl-coated poly. upper, Cordura-like poly. lower. Patented Bare A.T.R. (Automatic Torso Recoil) system
THICKNESS: N/A
SEALS: Latex
OPTIONS/FEATURES: Flexible, easy on/off, fit is male only, incorporates Bare Polar Extreme Underwear.
COST/PRICE: \$1399.95
CONTACT: 604-533-7848

Other Products/Services

Type: tri-laminate, neoprene **Seals:** latex, neoprene **Custom Sizing:** yes (Supra Dry Neoprene Suit only) **Warranty:** yes **Number of valves:** 2 DSV swivel inlet/DSU adjustable exhaust **Number of vents and locations:** chest and upper left arm **Options:** cuff ring system, customized wrist and neck seals, boots, various colors, hoods, gloves. Short sizes available on above suit.

OCEANIC



FLEX II DRYSUIT

FEATURED SUIT: Flex II Drysuit
MATERIAL: Trilaminate 200-gram abrasion/fade resistant polyester. Core material is 270-gram high-stretch Butyl/70-gram nylon
THICKNESS: N/A
SEALS: Latex
OPTIONS/FEATURES: Inter-locked/double-stitched seams, inflation valve/hose, cuff or shoulder dump, front/rear entry. Wrist/neck sizing, latex/neoprene hoods. 9 in. comfort zipper avail. Pockets: flat/consertina.
COST/PRICE: Rear entry \$1,495, front entry \$1650.
CONTACT: 510-562-0500

Other Products/Services

Type: tri-laminate, neoprene, crushed neoprene **Seals:** latex **Custom Sizing:** yes **Warranty:** yes **Number of valves:** 2 Number of vents and locations: 1, shoulder **Options:** colors, apex inflator, stitched, sealed and taped seams, front or rear entry.

AQUA LUNG



PRO VSN 1100

FEATURED SUIT: Pro VSN 1100
MATERIAL: Armatex nylon/compounded rubber.
THICKNESS: 2 mm
SEALS: Heavy-duty Latex
OPTIONS/FEATURES: Butt joined, stitched vulcanized seams, front/back entry. Apex valves, constant buoyancy at all depths.
COST/PRICE: \$2100
CONTACT: 760-597-5000; www.aqualung.com

Other Products/Services

Type: tri-laminate **Seals:** latex **Custom Sizing:** no **Warranty:** yes **Number of valves:** 2 **Number of vents and locations:** 1 on shoulder **Options:** vulcanized rubber material for the Pro Am 1050 and Pro HD 1500, special Armatex nylon/compounded rubber tri-laminate for the Pro VSN 1100. All suits available with heavy-duty latex neck seal or attached latex hood in a variety of sizes.

MOBBY'S USA, INC



TWIN-SHELL PRO DESIGN

FEATURED SUIT: Twin-Shell Pro Design
MATERIAL: Ceramic-Aluminum-Polyvinyl Chloride (Mobby's exclusive.) Outer: 1000 Denier Cordura Nylon.
THICKNESS: N/A
SEALS: Super Latex
OPTIONS/FEATURES: 360 inlet valve, auto-adjust outlet valve, walking sole boots.
COST/PRICE: \$1,545
CONTACT: 877-4MOBBYS, www.mobbys.com

Other Products/Services

Type: tri-laminate (with Outershell Covering), neoprene, crushed neoprene **Seals:** latex, neoprene **Custom Sizing:** yes **Warranty:** yes **Number of valves:** 2, inlet and outlet, custom available **Number of vents and locations:** 1 auto-adjust on left bicep, custom available **Options:** colors, valve placement, boot size, ankle seals or latex socks in place of boots.

TEST DIVE

Easy-to-use, no-hassle computer ... BC befitting a female ... new concept in finning ...



SEAQUEST VIPER COMPUTER

DO YOUR EYES LIGHT UP AT THE MERE MENTION OF TECHNICAL DIVING? IS COMPUTER PROGRAMMING YOUR IDEA OF A RELAXING EVENING? IF SO, THEN SEAQUEST'S NEW VIPER PROBABLY ISN'T FOR YOU.

If, on the other hand, you are an active diver looking for the latest in high-performance, low-hassle, full-range dive computers, the Vyper is definitely worth your consideration.

This compact unit offers all of the must-have

ing, compact dive instrument that works right out of the box.

The Vyper also boasts a sophisticated new decompression software model which uses a proprietary Reduced Gradient Bubble Model to calculate nitrogen exposure. This technology benefits the average diver because it is designed to

adjust for real-world diving scenarios such as multi-day diving, closely spaced repetitive dives, repetitive dives to a greater depth and rapid ascents.

The computer takes the diver's actual ascent rate into account when planning future dives, and has a built-in safety-stop feature. While not designed or intended for planned decompression diving, it will continue to provide complete information when a diver enters a decompression situation.

Divers wishing to add an extra degree of safety can select from two levels of additional conservatism.

The Vyper will appeal to divers who want the latest in compact, leading edge technology, but not added complexity. It's also a good choice for those of us who dive within the limits, but not always by the traditional rule book. —Pierce Hoover

SUMMARY

A latest-generation dive computer that uses technology to bring safety and convenience to the average diver. Easy enough for the novice to understand and operate but also well suited to advanced-diving practices. For more information, see your local SeaQuest dealer, call 760-597-5000 or browse the Web: www.sea-quest.com.

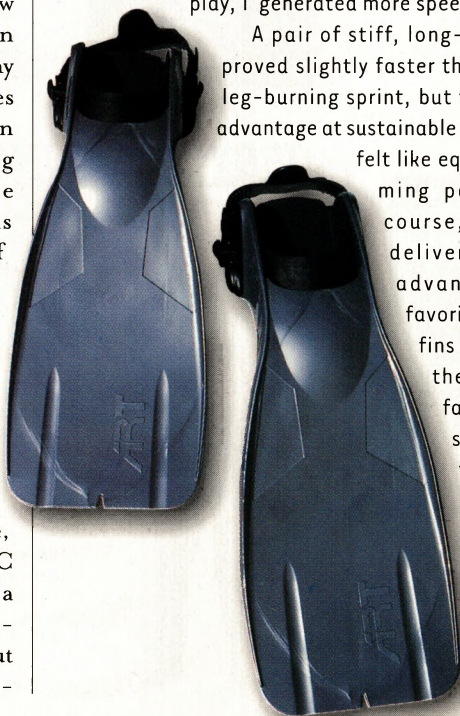
functions that divers now expect on a latest-generation computer — along with many of the "gee-whiz" features formerly found only on complex technical diving computers. But with the Vyper, the technology is used to support the types of real-world profiles done by the majority of divers.

Yes, you have a massive number of advanced options, including programmable nitrox settings, user-controlled depth and time alarms, a gauge-only technical mode, oxygen monitoring and PC download capability with a 36-hour log and a 999-dive/999-hour history. But you also have a self-activat-

Ocean Master ART Fins

OCEAN MASTER'S NEW ART FINS FEATURE A SEPARATE FOOT POCKET AND A BLADE THAT IS ATTACHED TO THE REAR OF THIS POCKET BY A PAIR OF CANTILEVERED RAILS. THE REASON FOR THIS SEPARATION IS THREE-FOLD. FIRST, IT ALLOWS FOR A SOFTER, MORE COMFORTABLE FOOT POCKET. SECOND, IT TRANSFERS THE force of kicking from the bridge of the foot and the tip of the toes to the ankle, which in turn brings more upper-leg force into the kick. Third, the separation of blade and foot pocket allows the entire blade to flex independent of foot position.

Using a stop watch and lap pool, I compared the ART fins to three other well-known high-performance fins. My initial impression of the ARTs was that I was semi-attached to an extra-soft blade. But after a few warm-up laps, I began to slow my kick slightly, and bringing more of the thigh muscles into play, I generated more speed without a noticeable increase in effort.



A pair of stiff, long-bladed traditional fins proved slightly faster than the ART in an all-out leg-burning sprint, but the ART provided a clear advantage at sustainable mid-range speed. At what felt like equal workloads and swimming paces on a 100-meter course, the ART consistently delivered a 2- to 3-second advantage over my current favorites. In addition, the ART fins seemed to bring more of

the upper-leg muscles into play, which should create less fatigue and cramping, and provided superior foot comfort. The soft, independent foot pocket definitely reduces pressure on the toe and instep, along with extra support for the bottom of the foot.

If your current fins cause you to cramp up or cause soreness in your toes and instep, you should definitely take a look at this new fin. And, if you are the type of diver who likes to cruise at a comfortable air-conserving pace, you will appreciate the way the ART design provides ample propulsion without a corresponding increase in workload.

SUMMARY

The ART fin is extremely comfortable and seems to provide extra efficiency at mid-range speeds, especially when the entire leg is used in the kick cycle. To learn more, visit your local Ocean Master dealer or call 800-841-7007.

MARES FRONTIER VERA BC

ILL-FITTING DIVE GEAR IS NO LONGER A CROSS WOMEN MUST BEAR. IF THEY DO, THEY HAVEN'T BEEN GEAR SHOPPING RECENTLY. MANUFACTURERS HAVE MOSTLY ABANDONED THE "SMALL-AND-PINK PRINCIPLE"

admonished by the Women's Scuba Association. Now companies are making gear that is truly designed for women's bodies and in colors including drab gray and black-on-black. How rugged.

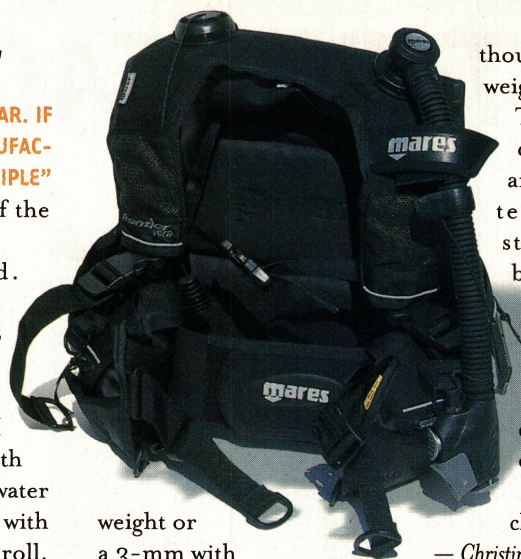
The Mares Frontier Vera jacket BC is a perfect example. The jacket is cut higher on the sides, the shoulder straps are slim enough for a woman's build and they adjust for small torsos. Mares' Self-Adjusting Harness System (SASH) uses a pair of rings on the shoulder straps and inside the BC that are angled to provide a more natural feel. The chest strap fastens higher than most, which is

better to keep it out of the way but efficient.

So it looks good. How does it perform?

I tried on an XS Frontier Vera and tentatively fell "in like" with its plush lining. I began trying it out in both cold-water and warm-water situations. I was pleased with its no-slop fit. No tank roll, and none of that swimming-in-the-BC feeling. It was snug, though not encumbering, and it was definitely as luxuriously padded as a Lexus interior.

At the surface, it floated me upright. However, I was not entirely comfortable with the lift. With a 7-mm wetsuit and 11 pounds of



weight or a 3-mm with 4 pounds, I bobbed at mouth level with the vest fully inflated. In rough seas, I was more comfortable leaving the regulator in my mouth, though I found when I rolled onto my back, I was high and dry.

The Vera features a comfortable integrated weight pocket system,

though I prefer using a weight belt, personally.

The dump valves are conveniently located and the inflator system is properly streamlined. The buoyancy bag is constructed of 1000 Denier DuPont Cordura and is well sealed. It comes in gray/black or blue/black.

At least it didn't clash with my wetsuit.

— Christine Dummit

SUMMARY

A solid, well-designed women's BC that features an integrated weight system, Self Adjusting Harness System and rugged Cordura fabric. Suggested retail cost is \$459. For more information, contact your Mares dealer, or visit www.mares.it.

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capacity for ecstasy. The human body is

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another fifty million years for my species

to evolve into water breathing

creatures. I can't wait that long.

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JUST SURFACED

1 DIVE-44

California-based Dive-44 has introduced exciting new apparel for divers. The company's DiveAloha shirt and Boat Trunks are durable and stylish. The DiveAloha shirt is 100-percent poplin, featuring a limited-edition original Dive-44 print with flowers, sharks and divers, a chest pocket, side vents and coconut buttons. Sizes S-XXL come in red, royal or light blue and cost \$49.95.

Dive-44 Boat Trunks are made of a water- and wind-resistant nylon supplex shell with a polar-fleeced lined waist, side pocket and drawstring waist. Sizes 30-34, 36, 38, 40. Colors are red, navy or black and cost \$45.95.

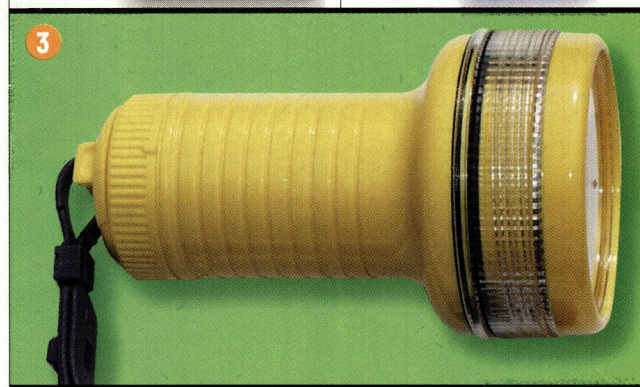
For more information on the shirts, shorts or other Dive-44 products such as T-shirts, call 877-4-DIVE-44 or visit www.dive44.com. By the way, about that name — Dive-44 — the 44 part is meters: the metric equivalent of the recreational dive limit (130 feet).

2 DIVE PLANNING CD-ROM

Sports 'n Fun's *Explore the Blue Planet* is an interactive CD-ROM that can help plan your next dive vacation. With 191 countries, maps, photos, operators, live-a-boards and a wealth of dive and location-specific criteria, this digital tool may eliminate the guesswork on where or with whom to dive.

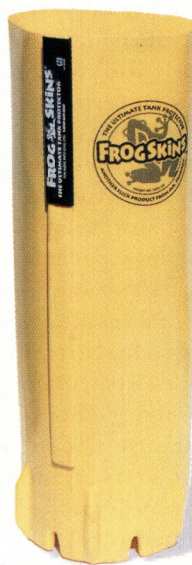
Search by clicking on the world map and narrowing your search by location, resort, etc.

Order off the Web: www.sports-n-fun.com for \$29.95 COD. Order by mail or fax: Eskon Holding AG, Gleueter Strasse 277, D-50935, Cologne, Germany. Phone: 49-221-4674-000; Fax: 49-221-44674-007.



3 SEA-LITE DIVING LIGHT

SEA-lite, a new multipurpose submersible dive light, has made its debut this fall, offered by the Savannah Trading Co. The SEA-lite features a high-intensity krypton beam and is waterproof up to 160 ft. The light is compact — 4-1/2 inches long — and has a double O-ring seal and a rotating switch. It is conveniently powered by four AA batteries. SEA-lite is available in yellow or black and includes a spare bulb and an adjustable PVC hand strap that is easily clipped to a BC D-ring. The light costs \$10. For information, call 561-223-9528 or visit: www.savtrade.com.



4 FROG SKINS

Tough and sleek, Frog Skins' "Ultimate Tank Protector" from CMI Engineering makes both a gear and a fashion statement. This revolutionary new product uses a patented anti-shock bottom to absorb more force and prevent dents and uses a tough PVC skin for better protection and less drag in the water.

Interior drain channels filter water away from the tank. Six outrigger ribs prevent your tank from rolling and the full-length pleat with the "zip strip" allows the tank tube to expand for easy loading. Two sizes (80 and 63 cu. ft.) and four colors (pink, green, yellow, blue) are available for \$32. Call 800-640-2345.

5 MYSTERIOSO RASH GUARDS

The Unisex Shortsleeve Rash Guard/Sunshirt from Mysterioso has been scientifically tested to give wearers extra sun protection that won't wash off. The guard's SPF 25 Sea Skin fabric is a multi-stretch poly/Lycra made for snorkeling, diving, surfing or just beachcombing.

Colors for the unisex short-sleeve include white, black and blue and four patterns: leopard print, butterflies, Hawaiian print and liquid blue designs. Retail price is \$36.

For more information on rash guards or other Mysterioso products, call 877-457-0556; e-mail: stevieg@gte.net; Web: www.mysterioso.com.

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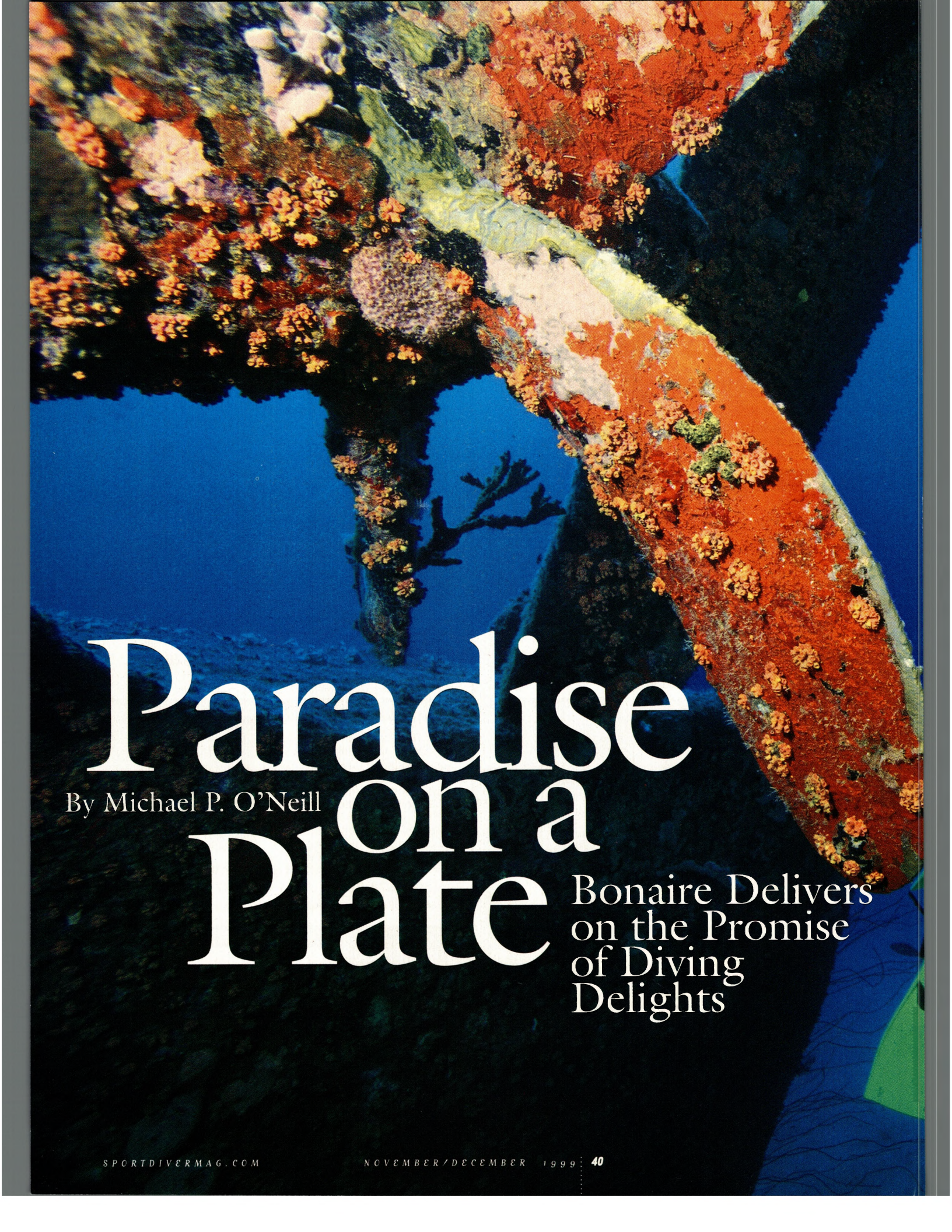


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Paradise On a Plate

By Michael P. O'Neill

Bonaire Delivers
on the Promise
of Diving
Delights



DOES ANY OTHER PLACE HAVE SUCH CHUTZPAH?

Diver's Paradise," etched in white on every wine-colored license plate in Bonaire, implies perfection, confidence. Those who have been to the island know very well why this simple yet assertive slogan is there. But for the first-time

visitor like me, it strikes a chord. Between us, I was doing some soul-searching on my ride from Flamingo Airport to Captain Don's Habitat. I couldn't remember another destination with such chutzpah - and I've been around the block a few times.

Saturday night traffic in downtown Kralendijk put me face to face with more of these little mobile billboards pitching scuba diving in local waters. "These people are on to something," I say to myself as the hotel comes into view along the dark road. In my Caribbean travels, could I have been missing something so special?

Less than 24 hours later, I can emphatically say "yes."

Quite simply, Bonaire is reaping what it sowed decades ago. Back then, government, Bonaire residents and the dive industry miraculously focused on their common goals and similarities rather than on their differences. Words evolved into action early, and together they created a successful model for sustainable development that ensured the preservation of the island's gifted environment.

The creation of a marine park in 1979 was a key component of this effort. Moorings were fixed to dive sites to eliminate anchor damage; markers were placed to orient boat captains and shore divers; and educational campaigns were implemented to keep the island and its waters impeccably clean.

In short, they walked the walk and talked the talk. Today, some 25,000 divers visit this small island every year, yet the underwater terrain shows little if any wear from the traffic.



FAR LEFT: WALT STEARNS INSET: MICHAEL P. O'NEILL

"JUST BE BACK WITH 500 POUNDS OF AIR," THE DIVEMASTER CHIMES EVERY TIME I ROLL BACK INTO THE WATER. AMEN.

KLEIN BONAIRE Protected on three sides by its big sister's boomerang shape, Klein Bonaire is one of the crown jewels of Caribbean diving. Below the waterline, this flat, parched and uninhabited islet transforms itself into a marine Eden. Hard corals dominate the ultra-clear shallows all the way to the lip of the sloping wall. From there, multicolored sponges — thin ones, fat ones, crooked ones — take over, all the way to the sandy bottom some 140 feet or more below. Crossing the narrow channel to this coral kingdom takes 10 minutes, and the diving schedule is laid back, like all things here. Control freaks are mercifully absent, and there's

no diver detention for those who choose to wander. "Just be back with 500 pounds of air," the divemaster chimes every time I roll back into the water. Amen.

I drift off, physically and mentally, getting happily lost at Carl's Hill, Southwest Corner, Leonora's, Munk's, Mi Dushi and other sites circling this precious gem. My plan is no plan, and I go where the fish go. Along the way, bullet-shaped bonefish, horse-eye jacks and typical tropical assortments take me over the edge through rocky labyrinths where electric-blue chromis play tag and cleaner shrimp hustle small grouper. In the sunlit forests of elkhorn coral, throngs of blue tangs move like stampeding storms, raining on algae patches to feed, annoying the hell out of grumpy damselfish.

However, if your thing is guidance or handholding, just ask. Captains and divemasters earn their keep assisting new divers on their first open-water excursions. The latter are all eyes and bubbles as they gaze at their first moray slow-dancing to the current's beat.



UNDER THE COVER OF NIGHT

It is criminal not to night dive here. In fact, if you don't, I think you should go to jail. The pool is open around the clock, and operators leave full tanks on waterfront decks, where guests load and reload deep into the night. Wooden stairs with railings make entries and exits super-easy, and with the drop-off just a few kicks from the docks, divers are in the thick of things in minutes.

The never-forgotten, often stressful inaugural night dive is a different animal in Bonaire. While on holiday, many teenagers and their parents complete their first ones together and are forever imprinted and hooked with the sights and sounds of the reef at nighttime. The diver traffic and loud babble coming from the lockers and docks after dinner are a testament to this.

One night, I have to see for myself what the fuss is all about at the legendary Town Pier. In private, I'm told to time my visit for late at night, when normal human beings are going to bed. In the quiet evening, the massive concrete structure is dark and tranquil. The sediment stirred by boatloads of night divers has settled, the orange cup corals are at full bloom and the creepy crawly things that enchant us have

Above: One of the author's passions is searching out and photographing frogfish. At left: A tiny trunkfish flirts with the camera at the Town Pier. At right: The Town Pier and the Salt Pier are lush with marine life.



AT 58 FEET, THE OBJECT OF MY OBSESSION GLOWS LIKE A BALL OF



WALT STEARNS

resumed their nighttime quests for food, adventure and love.

After spending 20 minutes on my first pillar photographing decorator crabs, I look around and realize there must be at least 60 more to investigate. Reaching the surface from 20 feet, each column has a story to tell. For the remainder of the night, I choose the widest one and unveil some of its treasures. A cola-colored trunkfish, marble-size with a sprinkling of yellow dots, leaves the safety of the coral to hover over my extended hand; a juvenile scorpionfish lies frozen anticipating its next meal; and a goldentail moray forages for sleeping fish around yellow tube sponges.

The following night I'm back at it again, this time at La Machaca Reef in front of Captain Don's. A friend convinces me to embark on a search for an octopus that lives near Papa Dock, the larger of two structures stretching from beneath the Deco Bar, a colorful watering hole managed by a Dutch ballerina on an extended hiatus. The cephalopod is out for dinner or maybe even became dinner. However, several box jellyfish corralling minnows on the surface make up for the no-show. Also present are Charlie, a 6-foot tarpon with an uncanny ability to stalk and scare distracted divers, and a snook in the 20-pound class that allows me to give it a back-rub before I exit the water.

"Y" MARKS THE SPOT

Without a doubt, the long-lure frogfish is one of the celebrities of the sea, and for many, Bonaire is kind of like Beverly Hills — the place to go if you want to see the big names. This species is common here. Well, come to think



Bonaire is known for its walls, but shallow reefs are full of life and great for snorkeling or for a leisurely dive. Many dive sites are within an easy swimming distance of shore, making the island very diver friendly.

of it, they are everywhere and nowhere at the same time.

If you find one on your own, without local assistance, you deserve to have your mug up on Mount Rushmore or at least a Congressional Medal of Honor. Undisputed stars in the greatest disappearing act of all time, these charismatic little villains fascinate me. Since I'm running on a tight schedule, upon arrival I leave my ego at the hotel room and immediately start working the rumor mill, looking for directions, assistance — whatever — to find a "froggie" during my weeklong stay. Jerry, a knowledgeable UW naturalist at Sand Dollar Resort, comes to the rescue. Incredibly, the guy puts me in front of one in minutes at Bari Reef.

"We call this guy the Stevie Wonder frogfish," he begins, pausing to rinse his mask while sitting on the dive deck,

FIRE — BRIGHT YELLOW AND ONLY 3 INCHES LONG.



MICHAEL P. O'NEILL

"because even Stevie could find him. See that ketch, the *Sea Witch*? Follow its mooring rope underwater until it forms a Y, then look down among the sponges."

As promised, at 58 feet the object of my obsession glows like a ball of fire. Bright yellow and only 3 inches long, it

watches a shoal of glass gobies approach. When the unsuspecting prey are almost within range, the immobile predator lowers a translucent appendage from its nose. From this "fishing pole" dangles a whitish lure, known as an esca, which attracts the gullible gobies. Fetus-like hands steady the frog-

TOPSIDE BONAIRE

BY HEATHER CALLAHAN
Catering to those who want the complete tour, several companies on Bonaire offer definitive guided excursions. You can cover the highlights of this 112-square-mile Dutch island in three to four hours.

The "Island Journey" tour by Bonaire Tours is offered Mondays

through Fridays in an air-conditioned bus or van, depending on group size.

STOPS INCLUDE:

- The "1000 Steps" dive site along the northern coastline. An impressive view of the water and a sigh of relief that you're not carrying your gear and tanks down all those steps.

Divers can easily locate Bonaire's 100 dive sites by the yellow painted stones that mark the areas.

- "Goto Lake" is a stop where you can catch a glimpse of Bonaire's pink flamingos.
- Rincon: Bonaire's first settlement, which dates back to the 1500s, when it was built to hide from the view of pirates.
- The huge salt mounds and salt

pans and the historic slave huts that serve as reminders of Bonaire's slave industry.

There are plenty of opportunities to take photos, and the drivers are very accommodating and knowledgeable. The price for adults is \$22; \$11 for children.

FOR MORE INFORMATION: BONAIRE TOURS 011-599-7-8778; BARANKA TOURS 011-599-7-2200.

NATURE MUST HAVE CREATED THE LEEWARD SIDE OF BONAIRE WITH

fish in preparation for the blurring attack, and I back off and let the hunt proceed. Whoever said observing frogfish is like watching paint dry?

THE WESTERN FRONT

Nature must have created the leeward side of Bonaire with divers in mind, especially those with a predisposition to seasickness or an aversion to crowded boats. For most of

the western coastline, reef and road are separated only by a narrow gravel beach. Markers bearing names like Nukove, La Dania's Leap, Winsack and Angel City, among others, point toward the sea and lead me to fields of staghorn coral, tree-size sea plumes, curious tarpon, clouds of brown chromis and burly tiger grouper.

To the south, the Salt Pier literally stands head and shoulders over the 60 or so shore-based sites. Its spider-like

DIVE OPERATORS

TOUCAN DIVING/PLAZA RESORT BONAIRE J.A. Abraham Boulevard, Kralendijk, Bonaire

PHONE: 599-7-2500 | FAX: 599-7-7133 | E-MAIL: plaza@bonairenet.com

WEB: www.plazaresortbonaire.com

COMMENTS: Three dive boats make daily trips based on divers' wants and schedules. Night dives available upon request. Captains and divemasters went out of the way to accommodate and protect my camera gear. Full-service retail facilities, nitrox and scuba instruction. Special trips to the eastern side of the island (depending on the weather) and to Washington Park. Facilities very well maintained and probably the nicest on the island.

BON BINI DIVERS Kaya Gobernador N. Debrot #90, Bonaire, Netherlands Antilles

PHONE 599-7-5425 | FAX 599-7-4425 | E-MAIL: francey@bonbinidivers.com

WEB: www.bonbinidivers.com

COMMENTS: Two dive boats make one-tank trips in the morning and afternoon. Night and shore diving available twice per week or at customers' discretion, as well as all-day trips to Washington Park and to the southern tip of the island. Scuba, UW video and photography instruction on premises. Staff very helpful and showed me some exceptional diving at the Salt Pier.

SAND DOLLAR DIVE & PHOTO PO Box 361, Bonaire, Netherlands Antilles

PHONE/FAX 599-7-5252 | E-MAIL: Sand\$Dive@bonairenet.com or info@DiscoverBonaire.com

WEB: www.DiscoverBonaire.com

COMMENTS: Large operation expertly managed and run. Four boats make four daily trips plus night dives on select days. Shore diving available 24 hours. Scuba instruction and full-service photo/video retail/rental shop with film processing and custom videos. Excellent UW naturalists on staff. On off-days, divers can kayak, snorkel or mountain bike.

BUDDY BEACH & DIVE RESORT PO Box 231; Kralendijk, Bonaire, Netherlands Antilles

PHONE 599-7-5080 | FAX 599-7-8647 | E-MAIL: buddydive@bonairenet.com

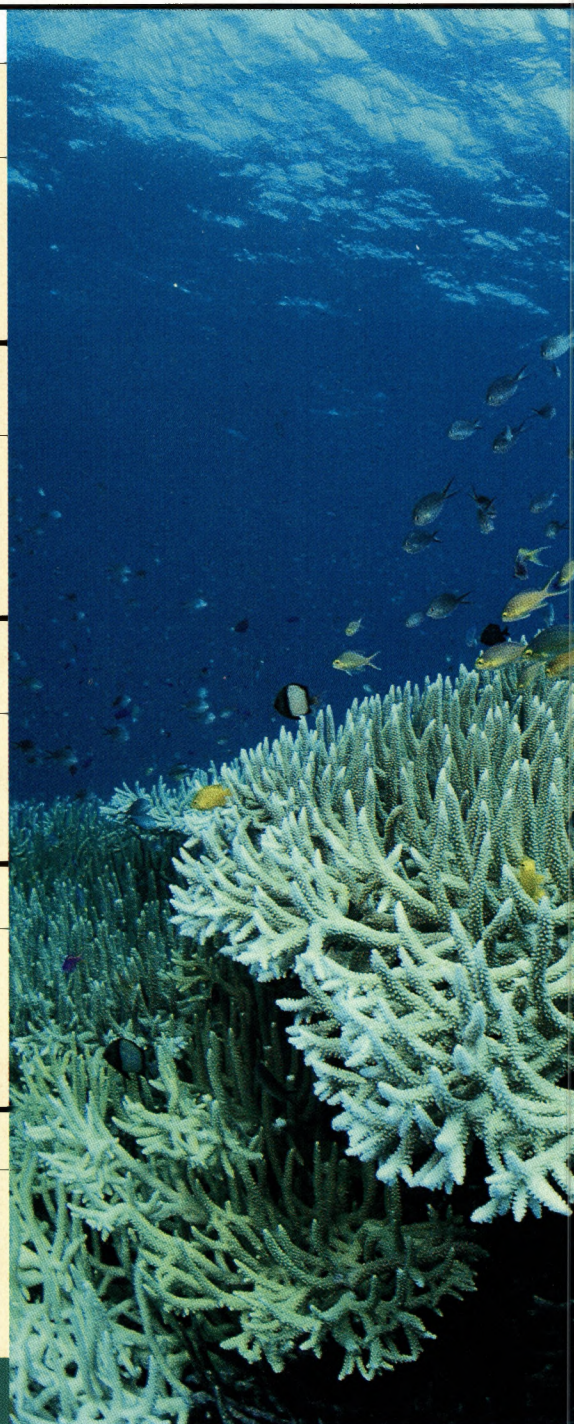
COMMENTS: Two dive boats, which take divers on morning, afternoon and night (upon request) one-tank trips. Shore diving and scuba instruction, nitrox photo lab and rental gear available. Excellent guides. Instructor/guide Eric Weber is a frogfish fanatic who keeps a detailed log of sightings — at one point, he had 25 specimens located and was kind enough to put me in front of his favorite.

CAPTAIN DON'S HABITAT PO Box 88, Bonaire, Netherlands Antilles

PHONE 599-7-8290 | FAX 599-7-8240 | E-MAIL: Bonaire@HabitatDiveResorts.com

COMMENTS: Excellent orientation and house reef, which kept me busy for two days straight. One-tank boat dives available throughout the day, as well as on select nights. Full-service dive store and UW camera/photo lab facilities. Nitrox, open water and scuba/rebreather instruction. Slogan "Home of Diving Freedom" is not a marketing gimmick, but a reality. Dive operations organized and efficiently managed.

FOR ADDITIONAL LISTINGS AND INFORMATION, VISIT WWW.SPORTDIVERMAG.COM



DIVERS IN MIND, ESPECIALLY THOSE WHO GET SEASICK.

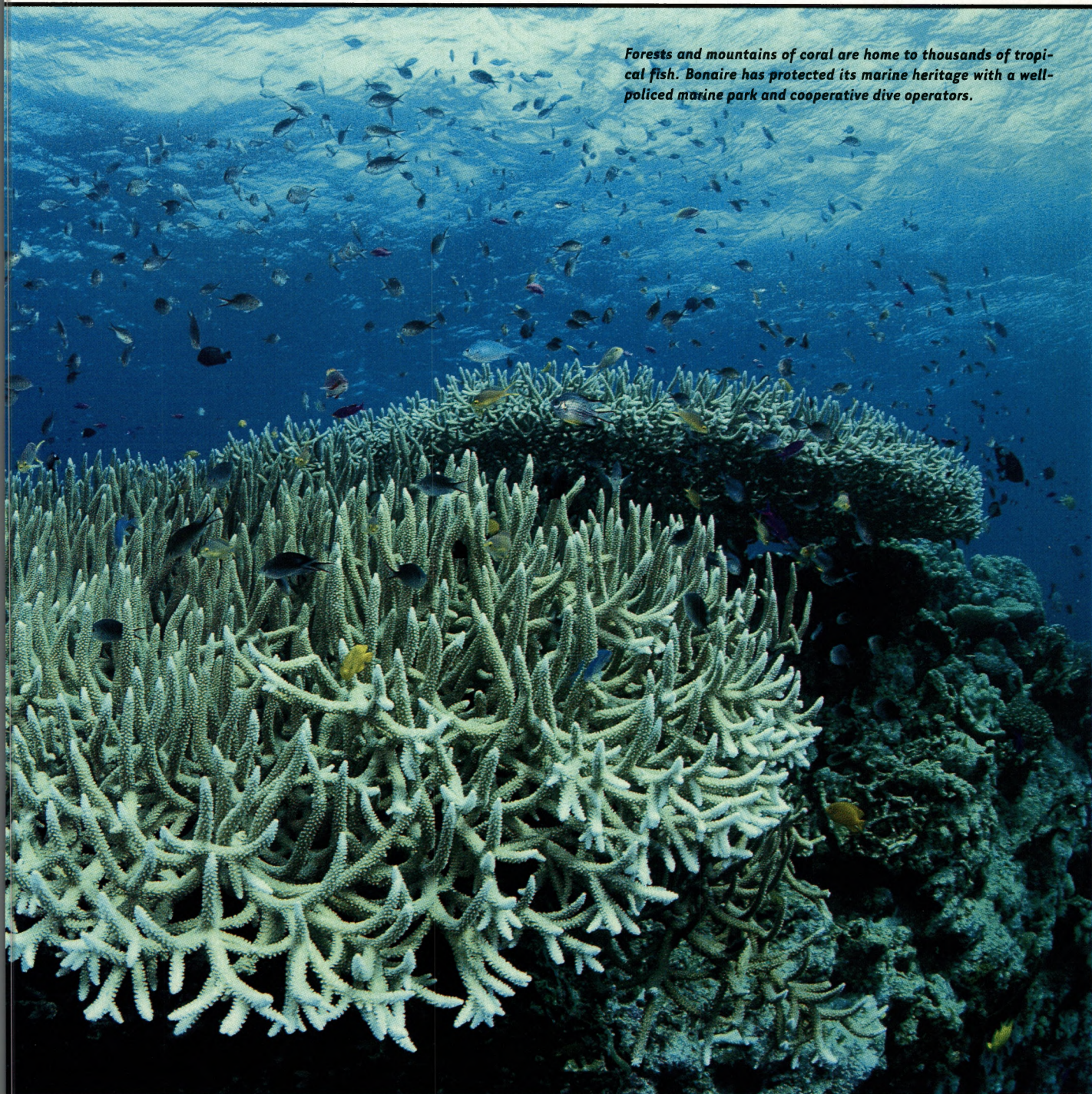
legs enter the water in tight clusters and gradually spread out toward the bottom at 45 feet. Its concrete limbs are now covered with yellow, blue and red invertebrate growth, and around them, I see a school of yellow goatfish play a high-stakes game of chess with a large barracuda. Tiny secretary blennies watch the drama unfold from their equally tiny homes in the abundant and undamaged brain coral.

While a map and rental car are indispensable to dive

these sites, I luck out because instructors at Bon Bini Divers, Buddy Beach Dive and Toucan Diving take me under their wings and show me their favorites. On all shore dives, we leave our van wide open, semi-abandoned along the road. Auto theft is apparently not an issue on the island.

Later in the week, I do experience a small but annoying loss. An old pair of Nikes, a priceless accessory in a place infested with thorns of every length and width, is missing

Forests and mountains of coral are home to thousands of tropical fish. Bonaire has protected its marine heritage with a well-policed marine park and cooperative dive operators.



WALT STEARNS

THIS PLACE IS SO PICTURESQUE THE GOATS MUST HAVE THOUGHT

from my entry point at 1,000 Steps. At first, I don't think it's a big loss. But as I climb back up to the road, the camera gear and the dive equipment on my back get heavier by the step. "How many left?" I wonder. 10? 100? 10,000? At this point, it doesn't make a difference. Finally by the car, I throw back two Cokes and a bottle of water, and in anger feel like adding a few more zeros to the yellow rock identifying the site.

WASHINGTON SLAGBAAI NATIONAL PARK

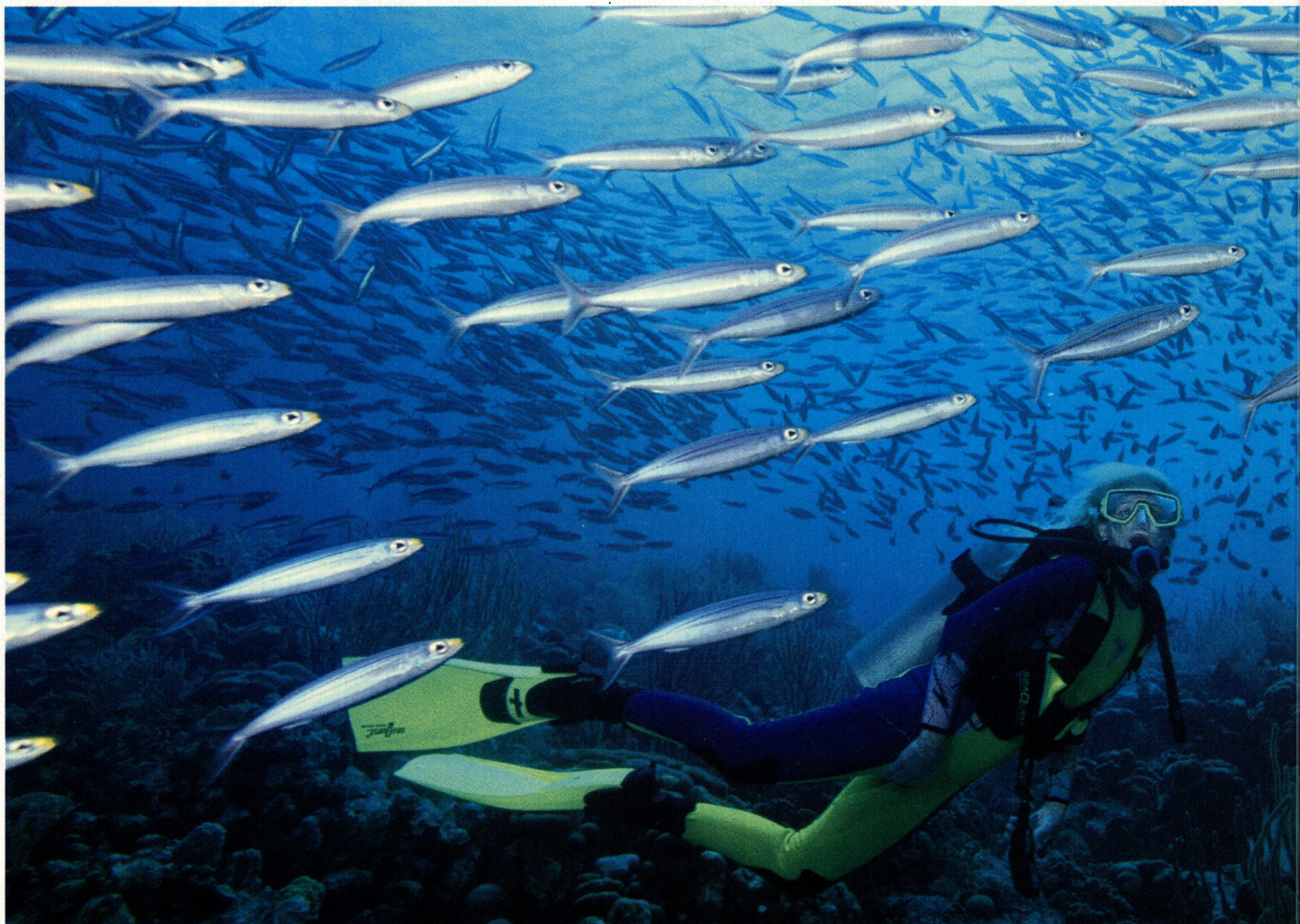
On my last day, I head north to the 13,500-acre Washington Slagbaai National Park. Originally established in 1969, it is the combination of the Washington and Slagbaai plantations and covers the northern tip of the island. The preserve is straight out of a western movie. Rocky ledges, cacti, prickly pears and scrub create a landscape wildly out of place on an island just 40 miles from Venezuela.

Baitfish school in swarms around a diver exploring Bonaire's pristine reefs. Divers have so much to explore around this island with boat and shore diving that it's tough to narrow down choices.

I circle the park on a punishing dirt road and end up at Slagbaai, a defunct seaside slaughterhouse situated on a pretty beach sheltered by limestone cliffs. This place is so picturesque that goats and livestock must have thought they had arrived at an oceanfront spa. Barefoot and shirtless, I climb a path along a cliff to photograph the old structure. The coral rock and thorns hurt my feet, and after every step, I curse the thief who walked off with my old sneakers. A local, walking by and wearing hiking boots, points at my red feet and says, "You brave, man." Mentally, I substitute "brave" for "stupid" and keep going.

I reach my objective, turn around and completely forget the pain and suffering endured conquering the lookout. The mustard-colored building blends smoothly with the arid terrain and nicely complements the shades of beige, brown, yellow and olive found on nearby hills and vegetation. The aquamarine sea bathes the rocky beach and cools a group of children, who are led by inquisitive minds toward a large pen holding live fish, which in turn attract hungry pelicans and irate fishermen.

Yep, divers' paradise.



THEY'D ARRIVED AT AN OCEANFRONT SPA.

DIVE TRAVEL PLANNER

GETTING THERE:

Air service to Bonaire is available through:

AIR ARUBA: From Baltimore, Miami, Newark, Philadelphia and Tampa via Aruba. U.S./Canada Reservations: 800-882-7822.

AIR ALM: From Atlanta and Miami. U.S. Reservations: 800-327-7230 Note: While I reconfirmed my return from Bonaire to the States four times, ALM officials in Bonaire's airport had no records of my calls. Watch this one carefully.

AMERICAN AIRLINES: From the U.S. via Aruba and Curaçao through connections. Reservations: 800-433-7300.

AIR JAMAICA: From Baltimore, Chicago, Los Angeles, Newark and Miami via Montego Bay. Reservations: 800-523-5585.

DIVE LOG:

BELOW THE HURRICANE BELT, BONAIRE RECEIVES LITTLE RAIN, ABOUT 22 inches per year, and the weather is hot, averaging 82 degrees F. The water temperature ranges from the high 70s to the low 80s, and when I visited

in early July, my computer's thermometer did not budge from 81 degrees F. The leeward side of the island, which includes Klein Bonaire and most hotels and dive sites, is generally flat-calm, and diving is possible year-round. The eastern and northeastern sides are exposed and can only be dived when calm conditions prevail.

GIVEN THE HEAT AND EFFORT INVOLVED IN SHORE DIVING, MAINTAINING proper hydration is an absolute must. Many dive sites are located in remote areas with no facilities or stores. Therefore, load up on extra water, sun block and lunch to spend the day out in the elements in comfort and safety. The island is quite safe, but as I learned the hard way, it's better not to leave any valuables in cars or along entry points.



THE DIVE OPERATORS WITH WHOM I DIVED WERE ATTENTIVE TO CUSTOMERS' needs and provided good but short briefings — just the right amount of information someone wants to hear while on vacation. They are also ready to lend a helping hand if you require assistance or to leave you alone and let you do your own thing. Some are larger than others, but all displayed excellent customer service. The high rate of repeats is a reflection of this. Quite frankly, at times I felt I was the only one who had not visited the island before.

RINSE TANKS FOR CAMERAS ARE FOUND ONLY ON SOME BOATS. THESE TANKS are still inadequate to accommodate all cameras usually found on board. I kept my camera wet on the short boat rides to the marinas (where camera-only tanks are available with clean, fresh water) by keeping it covered with wet towels and T-shirts, which protect the system from the sun and prevent drying out. Back on land, I was able to soak it the right way. **ON OFF-DAYS, VISITING WASHINGTON SLAGBAAI AND LAC BAY ARE MUSTS. THE** latter is one of the hottest stops on the windsurfing circuit. A shallow, clear-water lagoon, it provides the ideal training ground for veterans and beginners alike.



OUTING



DIVING TO EXTREMES

The crack in the polar ice zigzagged to the horizon, a jagged black line in the flat expanse of glaring white. Below us, the water clarity was phenomenal. Grass waved in razor-sharp focus 35 feet down. I eased in, better insulated from the 29-degree water than I expected ... until it hit my sunburned lips with a searing cold that felt more like fire than potential frostbite.

Translucent jellyfish in a half-dozen shapes floated by — rectangles with glowing running lights, horizontal tubes and other things that looked like a loosely connected mat of phosphorescent filaments.

Somewhere out there, not all that far from our frigid little dive site, a hungry polar bear was leaving alarmingly large footprints. And back home in Seattle, friends were asking in all seriousness if I had killed myself yet.

Well, no ... but you must admit, diving at Baffin Island in the Arctic Circle was a bit harebrained as dive jaunts go.

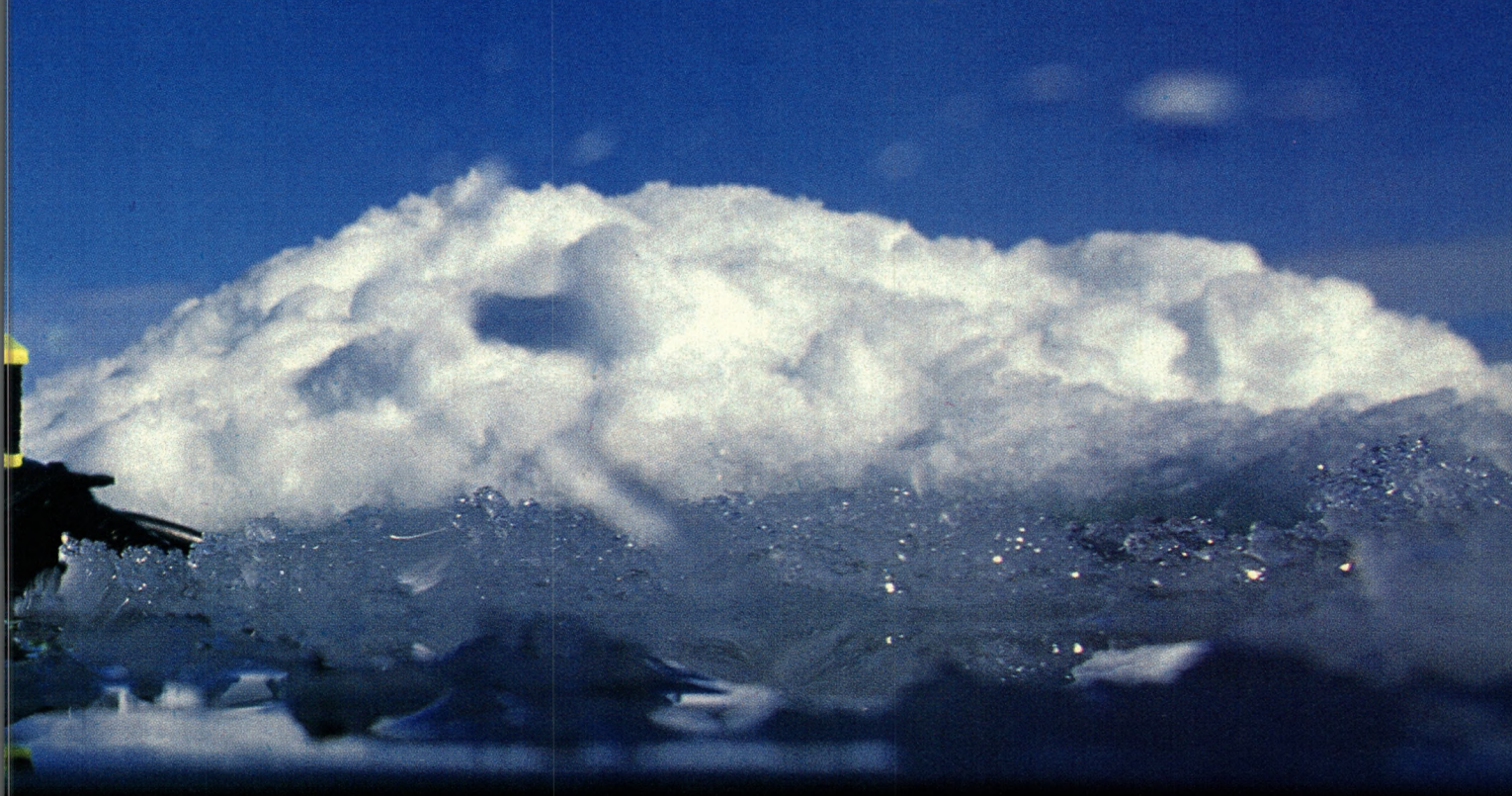
It all started with Tim Nease, owner of Capt. Tim's Reef Diving in Islamorada, Florida. This is a guy who may have watched one too many old Navy SEAL flicks, wears a skull-and-crossbones earring, spends his spare time playing bald heavies in Italian *Baywatch*-clone TV movies, and dreams of running dive trips to the high Arctic using local Inuit kids as the divemasters.

So there we all were, assembled in an Ottawa hotel while Tim talked about "the mission," "the hunt," our "daily assignments," the "chain of command," and how we would "all mold into a fighting unit." I was feeling more like G.I. Jane by the second.

We were a strange and eclectic group: dive-shop owner Tim and his deep pockets and buddy, ex-Navy SEAL/entre-

BY YVETTE CARDOZO

HE COLD



IN THE HIGH ARCTIC

preneur Glenn; Art, a Florida Keys cop who repairs computers on the side and is actually the behind-the-scenes organizer of this project; Elie, a French filmmaker who does the aforementioned ersatz *Baywatch* flicks between serious documentaries. We also had with us Elie's 17-year-old son; Mike, a virtual reality photographer; Molly, the assistant manager of the world's only underwater B&B; and Jennifer, the on-air talent from Miami's alternative TV station WAME (channel 69), who models on the side.

I'd done the math. We were hauling 1,500 pounds of scuba gear to a spot 1,000 miles shy of the North Pole. First Air personnel were somewhat startled when we showed up at the Ottawa check-in counter, but they gamely gulped and loaded.

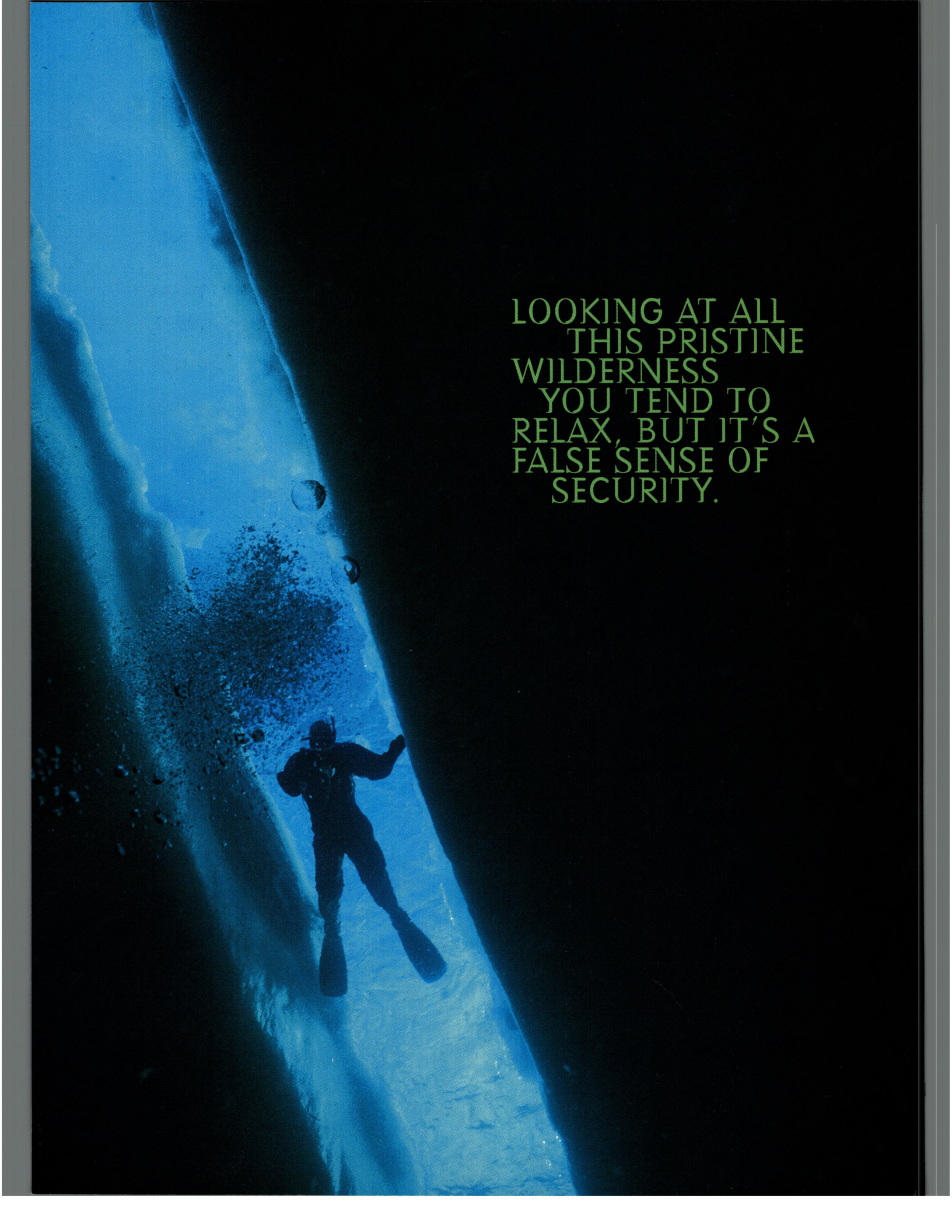
The flight up to Baffin Island (it's the one next to Greenland) was an experience itself. Somewhere over the Ungava Peninsula, we lost the trees. Then the bare earth disappeared beneath a spotty layer of snow. Out of Clyde River, the land was a stark moonscape of flat plateaus and chewed, precipitous cliffs that snaked back and forth in undulating lines. Clouds filled the valleys, creating a puffy blanket between the peaks, and in between, glaciers laid down straight, striated lines.

The sun, meanwhile, was plastered permanently at 2 p.m. Ah yes, the midnight sun. We were warned not to expect much sleep, and I remembered a frenetic three weeks above the Arctic Circle in Alaska. "So when do you people sleep?" I had asked.

"Oh, winter."

Each time the plane stopped, it got a bit colder ... chilly in Iqaluit, bone-rattling in Clyde River and snowing hard in Pond Inlet. Welcome to Baffin Island in June.

AMCS MACHUAM

A diver in a blue underwater environment, possibly a cave or deep sea. The diver is silhouetted against a bright blue light source, creating a strong contrast. The diver is wearing a full diving suit and fins, and is positioned in the lower left quadrant of the frame. A large, dark, curved structure, possibly a rock formation or part of a shipwreck, dominates the background, curving from the top left towards the center. The water is a deep blue, and there are some bubbles or particles visible near the diver.

LOOKING AT ALL
THIS PRISTINE
WILDERNESS
YOU TEND TO
RELAX, BUT IT'S A
FALSE SENSE OF
SECURITY.

The concept of floe-edge trips is not new in Pond Inlet. Local companies have been taking folks out for a decade. But the idea of diving is new. We would travel out in komatiks (Inuit sleds) pulled by snowmobiles, set up camp in a sheltered cove and dive leads (cracks in the ice). If all went well, we would also trek out to the floe edge (where the main ice pack ends at open ocean) and dive that as well. If we were really lucky, we might get to dive with narwhals, the dolphin-size whales with the unicorn tusks.

What with loading gear and all, we didn't take off until 4 p.m. for what would be a 35-mile, four-hour journey to the top of nearby Bylot Island.

The first several miles were over rough ice. We had foam pads and skins for cushions, but nevertheless it was

like doing 60 in a speedboat: bam, bam, bam, crash. Not a trip for the weak of back.

We had to cross several leads, the idea being that momentum would carry us over. And it worked most of the time. But we hit one lead at an angle. The komatik swerved sideways, and in slow motion it tipped, half-submerging us in wet slurry. For maybe 10 seconds, we sat there dumbly, and then we leaped out en masse and started grabbing camera gear. It took seven guys lifting the sled and the snowmobile pulling to get us free.

"You look at all this pristine wilderness and you tend to relax, but it's a false sense of security," guide Dave Reid said later. "The nature of the land is, if you do let your guard down for even half a minute, it'll kick you hard

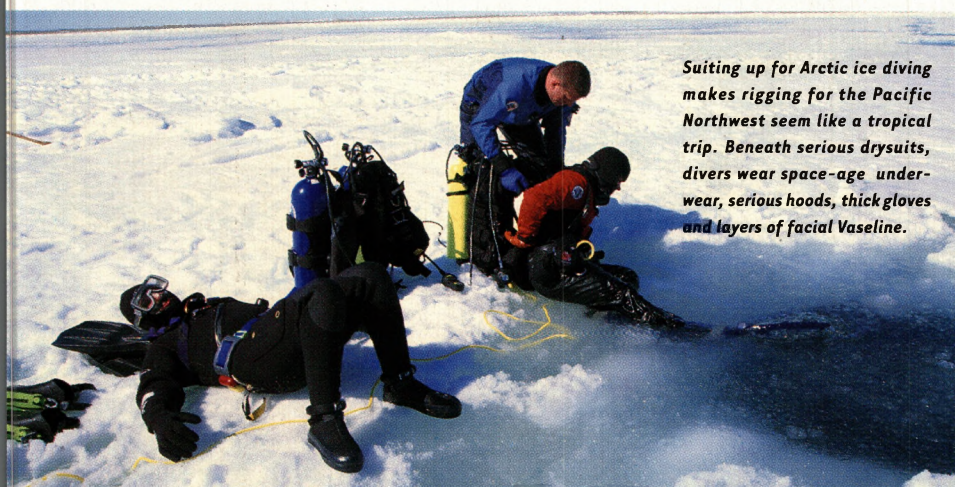
in the ass."

Reid, co-owner of Polar Sea Adventures, which organized our trip, had picked our campsite because it sat near a point of land. "Land points create a pressure point and that's where the leads form," he explained.

Suiting up for Arctic ice conditions makes diving the Pacific Northwest seem like a trip to the tropics. We were all in drysuits, and beneath mine I wore a new product with "phase-change" material. It absorbs heat while you're active in pre-dive, then gives it back when you're in the water. To this I added a hood that came down to my collarbone, three-finger gloves and gobs of Vaseline on my face.

And by God, it worked. I wasn't cozy, but I wasn't unreasonably cold either, (except for my lips, which felt like they were going to fall off). We had a constant reminder of the 29-degree water temperature because any water that splashed on our heads froze instantly to slush.

Below the surface, the crack shined an iridescent blue, shifting from cobalt to pale turquoise. I looked up and it stretched as far as I could see ... a shimmering trough with sides furrowed in vertical folds and feathery ice balls. All this was capped with the clearly visible images of our tenders, whose outlines were crystal-clear through some of the best visibility I've seen outside of a



Suiting up for Arctic ice diving makes rigging for the Pacific Northwest seem like a tropical trip. Beneath serious drysuits, divers wear space-age underwear, serious hoods, thick gloves and layers of facial Vaseline.

AMOS NACHOUM

DIVE TRAVEL PLANNER

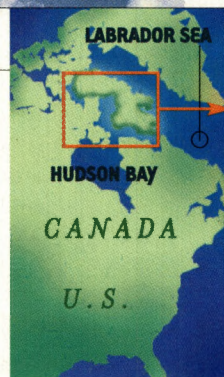
To picture Baffin Island north of Canada's Hudson Bay, think what Alaska must have been like 70 years ago. Elders still wear skin clothing, everyone hunts to eat, and the entire 1,000-mile-long island has barely 13,000 residents.

Pond Inlet, at the north end of Baffin, is twice as far from Montreal as it is from the North Pole. Summer, with temperatures still chilly enough for coats, comes in July and lasts fitfully through August. As for tourism, June is the time for floe-edge trips, July is for hiking, and August is for hiking along with whale watching, kayaking and fishing.

Tim Nease of Capt. Tim's Reef Diving plans to start his first commer-

cial arctic dive tour next June. The estimated \$4,000 price tag will include all land arrangements, camping gear and airfare from Ottawa or Montreal.

You will need to bring your own drysuit and personal dive gear. And since you will be camping in winter conditions, you will need warm clothing. (Expedition-weight underwear, ski outerwear and ski gloves work well.) Regular hiking boots won't do. You need waterproof footwear (something that you could wear in ankle-deep water) with an insulated lining. Ski goggles are handy for komatik trips. And you definitely want a billed hat, sunglasses and high-SPF sunscreen. Between the 24-hour sunlight and the glare of the



BRENDA WEAVER

snow, we all fried.

For more information on dive trips, contact Capt. Tim's Reef Diving, Box 1671, Islamorada, FL 33036; 877-664-0848; e-mail: h2oworld01@yahoo.com.

For general information on floe-edge trips, contact Polar Sea Adventures, PO Box 703, Station B, Ottawa,

ON, K1P 5P8, Canada; or Box 60, Pond Inlet, Nunavut, X0A 0S0, Canada; 867-899-8870; e-mail: info@polarseadventures.com.

First Air flies into and out of Pond Inlet four times a week. Call 800-267-1247. On a clear day, this might even include a tour of the glaciers and polar bear sighting.

LEFT: JYVETTE CARDOZO

WHAT TO BRING

People talk about how with water carrying heat away from your body 20 times faster than air, 80-degree water supposedly feels like 50-degree air. So where does that leave us in 29-degree water?

Very, very cold.

Because of the salt content, sea water can actually drop well below 32 degrees Fahrenheit before freezing. This calls for more than just a drysuit. On our trip north, we tried out a few new and not-so-new products.

The underwear was truly lead-edge. We ordered the brand-new, TR 1000 model from Andy's Typhoon

Water Wares (410-957-4414). Two layers contain a substance based on temperature-regulation products developed for NASA. Excess body heat is absorbed, "charging up" the material. When body heat drops below a predetermined point, heat is cycled back to the body.

In practice, the underwear is a bit bulkier and stiffer than standard drysuit underwear, but it's also a bit stretchy, so you soon forget the difference. Between diving and snorkeling, I was in the water for 45 minutes at a time, and while I felt a bit cold, I didn't start shivering until the end. On

my second dive, I added a polar fleece vest on top of the underwear and was comfortable.

My hood, the "warm neck vented hood" from DUI (800-325-8439), came down to my collarbone, and the bottom end tucked under a ring of material in my DUI drysuit. It was the best cold-water hood I've ever worn. It didn't trap air, I was able to clear my ears, and best of all, I didn't get that searing ice-cream headache you usually get in freezing water.

The rest of the crew was field-testing a battery of gear from Beuchat (800-248-0005). Art Ortolani spent eight hours in the water, three of them

all on the first day, and said the Beuchat drysuits kept him comfortable. I can't speak personally for the drysuits, but I can say Beuchat's new ice regulators worked flawlessly, even though we were less than flawless in our ice technique.

The idea is you're not supposed to breathe on the regulator until the first and second stages are submerged to keep condensation from freezing them. With all our flailing around, we often didn't get that quite right. However, the regulators kept going, regardless of how much snow accumulated on them, how hard we breathed or whether we were on our backs or upside down (don't ask).

freshwater cave.

And away from the open lead, the underside of the ice collected globs of our exhaled air. They formed dinner-plate slabs of silver.

I came up all smiles. And the snorkeling was even better.

A hundred yards to our left, the crack ended at a tiny cave with barely enough above-water space to fit our heads. Two-foot-long icicles hung from the front, and we had to slither over a huge frozen plate to get inside. There were clouds of brine shrimp and more of those translucent jellies with running lights.

That evening we explored icebergs frozen into the sheet of ice offshore. One huge block rose 150 feet. The front face was fairly smooth, and every so often melting chunks would fall off. But the backside was a collection of cracks and tunnels all hung with yard-long icicles that glistened like millions of translucent daggers against the glowing blue of the deep interior.

What made this even more special was the fact that we could walk right up to the thing and climb atop it. On a cruise ship, you can't get this close, and you certainly wouldn't dare it in a kayak. In a half-dozen Arctic trips, I'd never climbed an iceberg.

Our first attempted trek to the floe edge, 30 miles north of our camp, failed because wind threatened to open the leads and strand us on floating ice in open ocean.

On our way back, we ran into two hunters who had stopped to snack on



JVETTE CARDZO

their catch. They had shot a narwhal that morning. "A very big female ... as big as this boat," said Nyman Pewatoaluk, gesturing to the rowboat lashed atop his komatik.

These people don't hunt for fun. In a village where a box of cereal costs \$10, most locals live off what they catch "on the land." With customary Arctic hospitality, they offered us a taste of muktuk (raw whale skin).

The spotted skin and its white blubber were not fatty at all, but rubbery like octopus, and for some strange reason tasted faintly of coconut. The pale meat was soft, delicate and slightly oily with the feel and taste of bone marrow, which actually made sense since whales are mammals, not fish.

By now, we were beginning to realize our journey was not so much a dive

trip as an Arctic trek with a water component. The diving was only a small segment in the overall experience.

The next day we made it to the floe edge. It basically looks like a running river in the ice sheet edged by 3-foot-high rubble ice. The chunky stuff on the opposite "shore" was actually pack ice that had been pushed in by the wind.

We stopped by a red mound in the snow — the remains of the narwhal the hunters caught the day before. There were bear tracks all around us. "Here, the young female," Hammy said. Male tracks are longer and narrower with a more pronounced heel.

Hammy, 32, was a quiet man who packed an impressive amount of Arctic knowledge into an unassuming package. He had been to the North Pole twice, the last time hauling a Japanese

film actress and crew in komatiks.

So what's up at the Pole?

"This," Hammy said, sweeping his arm toward the white, featureless plain that had only an occasional chunk of ice to break the monotony.

On our last day, we finally made it to Pond Inlet's ice cave at the edge of a glacier. Melting snow had formed huge icicles like stalactites. The glacier tipped up to a flared blue lip with black concentric rings. Several holes opened to the sky, and 3-foot icicles dripped from them in spiky rings.

You could crawl 100 feet back into the cave, and the entire ceiling was covered with crystalline hoar frost. Frozen fingers had grown into foot-long plates with faceted crystals that measured 2 inches across. They were so fragile, your breath could bring them down.

On our way back to camp, our weather luck ran out. Our final dive was canceled, but Tim had a chance to put masks on the Inuit crew and got one youth, Eepa Ootoovak, into the water.

Tim's plan is to eventually bring Eepa, 19, to Florida and teach him to dive. Eepa would then head up a Pond Inlet dive crew for future trips.

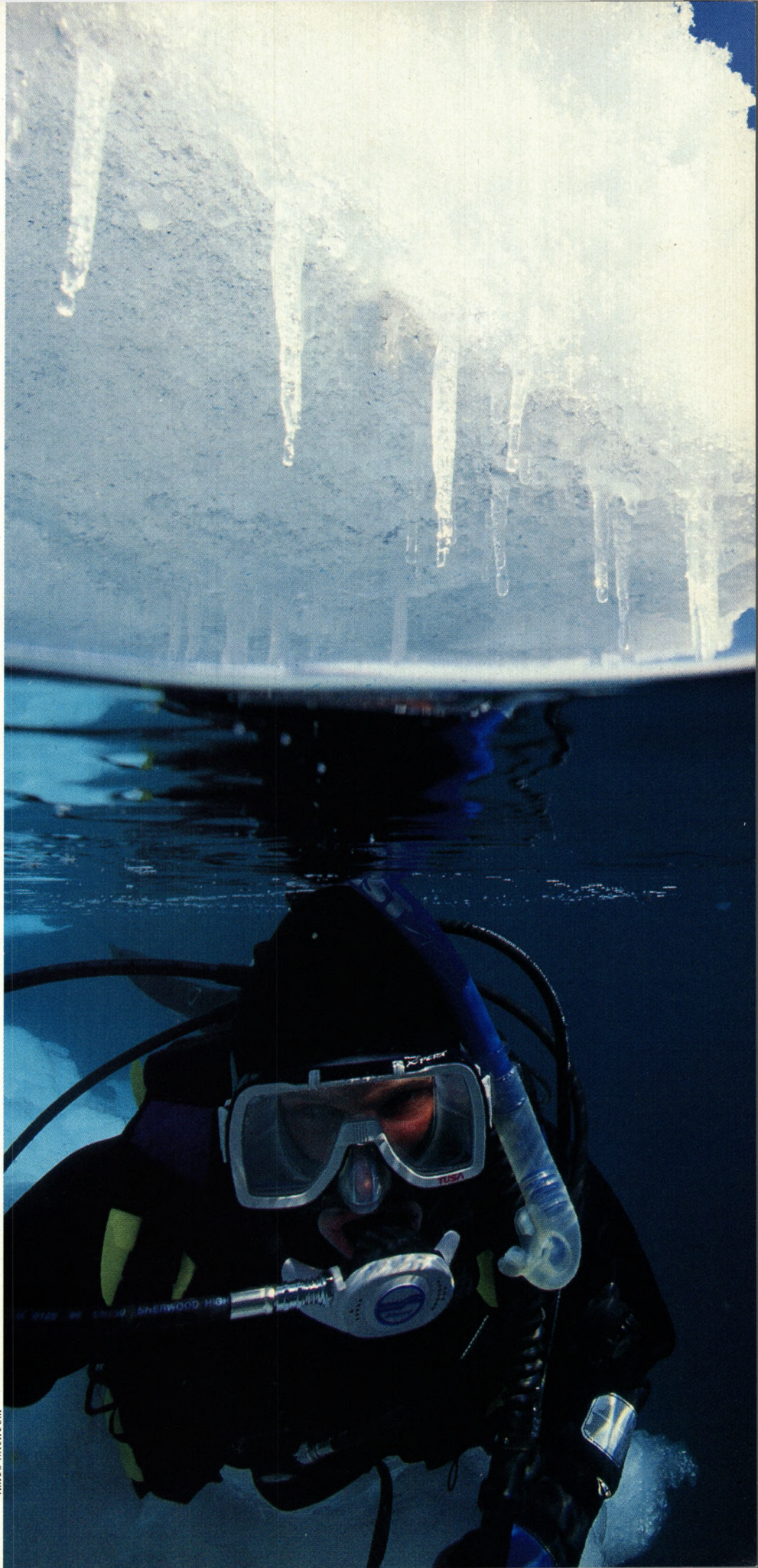
And Eepa, who has a reputation for being somewhat uninterested, was mesmerized. This kid who could barely keep focused in school caught onto the intricacies of dive gear instantly.

If Eepa had his way, he would have spent the night in the water. "It was a whole new world," he later said with soft intensity. "The jellyfish, the shrimp ... I never saw anything like that before. The water was so clear!"

On our last afternoon, someone spotted fresh bear tracks 100 yards from camp, and that night the Inuit crew stood guard. The next morning, we left, but not before Tim gave Eepa a mask and snorkel. Eepa wore the gear all the way back, breathing on the snorkel as he drove his snowmobile. When we reached Pond, the kids surrounded him like a conquering hero.

Back home, friends asked me if I would ever consider polar diving again.

God, yes! Some people dive to master fears or conquer nature. I am an image junkie. And the memory of that ice crack disappearing into the distance in an ethereal, glowing blue line will stay with me always. ■



AMOS NACHEUM



TREASURES OF CUBA

It

IS AN UNREMARKABLE PATCH OF SHALLOW REEF, SPARSELY INHABITED AND ONLY LIGHTLY DECORATED WITH SEA FANS AND LOW-RELIEF CORALS. AT FIRST GLANCE, IT SEEMS THERE IS LITTLE HERE TO ENTERTAIN DIVERS — MUCH LESS ENTICE THEM TO TRAVEL HUNDREDS OF MILES TO EXPLORE THIS SITE.

WHAT, THEN, HAS DRAWN US TO THIS REMOTE NORTHWESTERN EDGE OF CUBA? THE ANSWER LIES HIDDEN BENEATH THE SHIFTING SAND.

I DEFLATE MY BC, REMOVE MY FINS AND KNEEL ON THE SAND. USING A FIN BLADE TO FAN THE SEA BOTTOM, I PROBE FOR CLUES.

A HARD OBJECT EMERGES FROM THE BILLOWING DEBRIS CLOUD: A WEATHERED SCRAP OF WOOD. IS IT A REMNANT OF SHIP'S PLANKING OR MERELY DRIFTWOOD? MINUTES LATER, MY SEARCHING FINGERS LOCATE ANOTHER OBJECT, AND NOW THERE IS NO DOUBT. IN MY HAND LIES A BRONZE NAIL, PROOF THAT A HAPLESS VESSEL ONCE CAME TO GRIEF ON THIS EXACT SPOT.

ON THIS ISLAND,
UNDERWATER RICHES
ARE WITHIN YOUR
GRASP.

MOST SHIPWRECKS AND BURIED TREASURE ARE THE STUFF OF CHILDHOOD DAYDREAMS. AND YET, SOME OF US STILL HARBOR THESE DREAMS WELL INTO MIDDLE AGE, EVEN THOUGH WE REALIZE THE IMPROBABILITY OF ACTUALLY BECOMING PROFESSIONAL TREASURE HUNTERS.

NOT LONG AGO, I WAS ABLE TO FULFILL THIS LIFE-LONG FANTASY — WITHOUT HAVING TO QUIT MY JOB AND TRADE MY HOUSE FOR A RUSTIC SALVAGE SHIP. ALL IT TOOK WAS A PHONE CALL AND A WEEK'S VACATION.

YOU COULD JOIN THE SEARCH FOR THIS SAME TREASURE. AGAINST A BACKDROP OF TROPICAL SPLENDOR, CRUMBLING COLONIAL ARCHITECTURE AND THE MYSTIQUE OF THE HEMISPHERE'S LAST MARXIST COUNTRY, YOU COULD DISCOVER THE TREASURES OF CUBA. AND, YOU COULD DO IT WITHOUT BREAKING ANY LAWS.



Preparing for an unofficial visit to the *Sanchez Barcazategui*, just outside Havana Harbor.

DIGGING FOR THE FACTS

In early 1999, I heard of a program that would allow sport divers to visit a pair of wrecks currently under excavation by Cuban archaeologists. The organizer of this adventure was Scubacan, a Canadian tour operator specializing in bringing American divers to Cuba.

This was one story I wouldn't assign to a freelance writer, not only because I had a strong personal desire to dig for Spanish gold, but also because it was time to set the record straight on the issue of diving in Cuba. The last few writers — all single males — who I assigned to cover Cuba spent more time describing the Havana night life than the reefs' fish life. It was time to debunk all the myths and misconceptions surrounding this least known of Caribbean destinations.

HAVANA VICE

The first reality of diving Cuba is that you can't get there from here. You can, however, get there through Mexico or Canada, which is why my itinerary included a trip through Mexican customs and a layover in the Cancun airport.

In the two years since my last visit to Havana, the government, in a bid to increase tourism, has completely redone the Jose Marti airport. I arrived at a brand-new, ultra-modern terminal unlike anything in the Caribbean.

Outside the terminal, however, was the Cuba I remembered. Ancient American automobiles and battered Russian Ladas still rumbled down poorly maintained streets, Chinese bicycles carried wives, children and produce on their sturdy

fenders, and Havana's historic buildings were still in need of repair and a coat of paint.

Cuba, with its colorful history, rich human diversity and fascinating mixture of somber socialism and riotous Caribbean culture, is like no country on earth. No trip to the island would be complete without a day or two spent wandering the streets of old Havana. But on the evening of my arrival, the streets seemed less alive than I remembered.

"It's the police," my taxi driver explained. "No more *jinateras*, no more discos."

I learned that several months prior the Cuban government had staged a massive cleanup of Havana. Some 4,000 additional police officers were added to the force, private nightclubs were closed, and thousands of street hustlers and prostitutes were deported from the city.

"It's more difficult now, but I can still get you girls, nice young girls," my driver confided.

For the middle-age male tourists who had made Havana the new sex-for-hire capital of the western world, this crack-down must have been most unwelcome. But as far as I was concerned, it was a convenience.

On my first visit to Cuba, the only hustlers in evidence were local Havana girls hoping to rope in a cash-cow tourist to pay cover charges at the discos or fund a shopping spree for scarce luxury items such as perfumes and dresses.

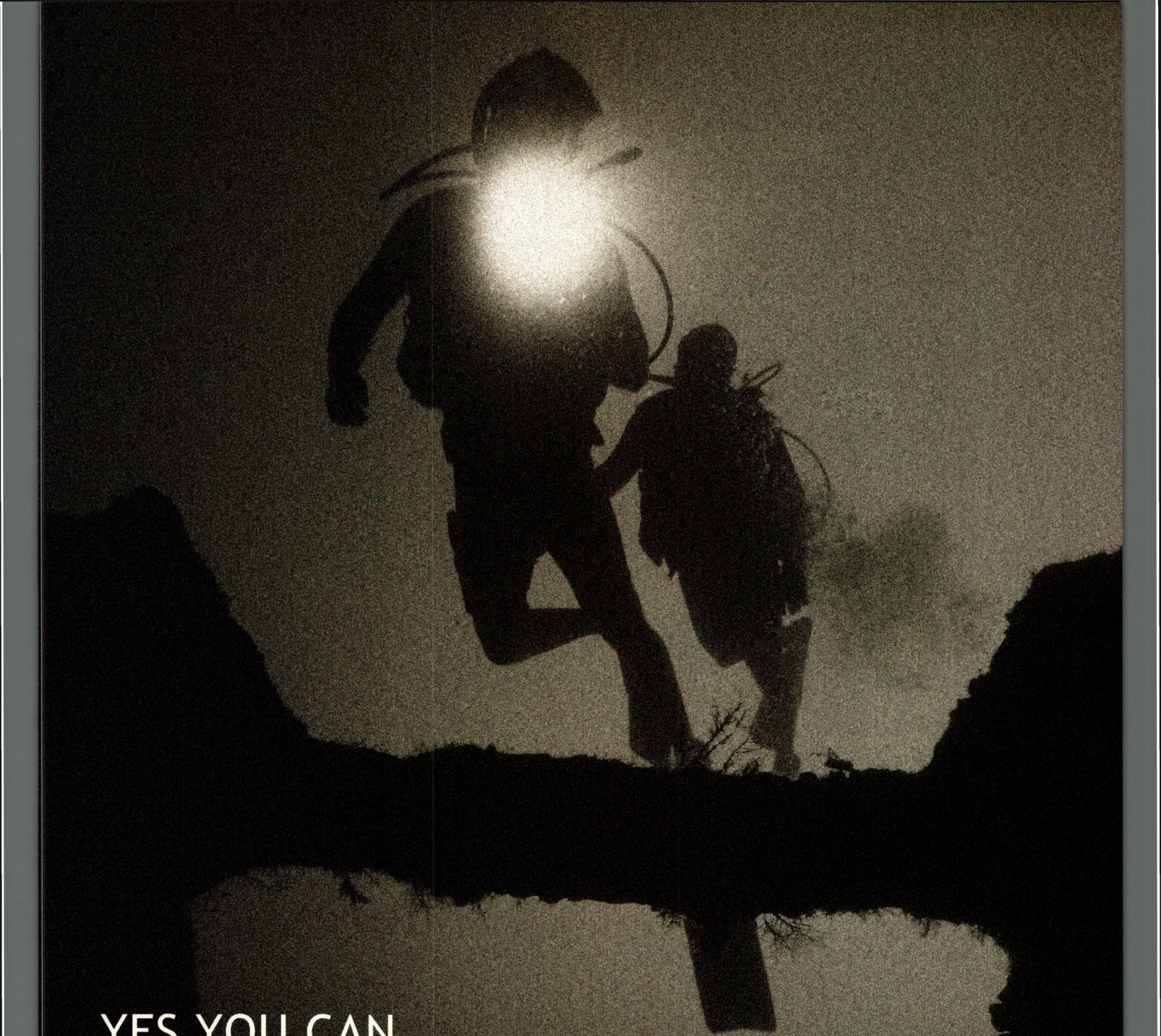
Four years later, this amateur pastime had evolved into an industry, complete with pimps, purse snatchers and rip-off schemes that left the John's battered and penniless at the conclusion of an illicit liaison. Any foreign male on the street — even those with a wife or girlfriend in tow — drew an instant crowd of leering, pawing prostitutes, along with an equal number of street hustlers offering everything from bootleg cigars to drugs.

Today, with police literally on every corner, tourists can once again walk the streets of Old Havana without incident, and sins of the flesh are no longer the easy fodder of travel writers.

SURFACE INTERVAL

For divers, Havana is an added-value stopover on the way to the Isle of Youth, Cayo Largo, Maria la Gorda and other dive destinations now evolving along Cuba's southern and western shores. From previous experience, I knew that these destinations provided reasonable accommodations, adequate meals, extremely professional dive staffs, and reef and wall diving equal to anything found in Cozumel or the Cayman Islands.

This trip, I would skip the southern coast and spend my bottom time with Carib Sub — the branch of the Cuban government involved in underwater archaeology. To attract for-



YES YOU CAN, BUT SHOULD YOU?


IF YOU ARE READY FOR A CUBAN DIVE ADVENTURE, BE IT TREASURE HUNTING, EXPLORING THE SOUTHERN REEFS OR SAMPLING A VARIETY OF DIVE ADVENTURES, YOU NEED TO CONTACT SCUBACAN AT 888-799-2822 OR ON THE WEB AT WWW.SCUBACAN.COM.

WHEN DIVERS FIRST LEARN THAT THERE IS A LEGAL WAY TO VISIT CUBA, THEY TYPICALLY ASK TWO QUESTIONS. FIRST, AM I DOING SOMETHING UN-AMERICAN BY GOING, AND SECOND, IS THE DIVING ANY GOOD?

THE ANSWER TO THE FIRST QUESTION WILL DEPEND ON YOUR PERSONAL POLITICAL VIEWS AND YOUR UNDERSTANDING AND INTERPRETATION OF OUR HISTORIC AND CURRENT RELATIONSHIP WITH CUBA.

ASKING ABOUT THE QUALITY OF CUBAN DIVING IS LIKE ASKING THE SAME QUESTION OF THE ENTIRE STATE OF FLORIDA. CUBA IS MORE THAN 700 MILES IN LENGTH, BORDERS BOTH THE ATLANTIC AND CARIBBEAN AND OFFERS THOUSANDS OF MILES OF COASTLINE, BARRIER REEFS AND OFFSHORE ISLANDS. THE NATURE AND HEALTH OF THESE REEFS VARIES WIDELY FROM AREAS NOT WORTH A VISIT TO OTHERS THAT RIVAL THE BEST OF THE BAHAMAS, MEXICO OR THE CAYMAN ISLANDS.

WITH GUIDANCE, YOU CAN ENJOY A FIRST-RATE, REASONABLY PRICED DIVING VACATION IN CUBA. BUT THE UNDERWATER TERRAIN IS ONLY PART OF THE REASON WHY DIVERS ARE DRAWN TO CUBA. A VISIT TO THIS ISLAND IS ABOUT STEPPING INTO A PIECE OF LIVING HISTORY, CATCHING A GLIMPSE OF A FADING SOCIAL ORDER AND SATISFYING CURIOSITY AND FASCINATION FOR A PLACE THAT MOST OF US KNOW BY NAME ONLY.

A black and white photograph showing a diver in the foreground, illuminated by a bright flashlight beam. The diver is wearing a mask and fins, and is positioned diagonally across the frame. In the background, another diver is visible, and the dark, murky water suggests an underwater wreck site. The overall atmosphere is mysterious and adventurous.

The hulk of the *Sanchez Barcazategui* still contains an estimated 20,000 silver coins.

eign tourism dollars, this agency has partnered with Scubacan to allow treasure-hunting wannabes like me to visit otherwise off-limit wreck sites.

Joining me to document the treasure hunt was underwater photographer Amos Nachoum. Although he is best known for swimming with orcas, walrus, great whites and other large, toothy critters, Amos shares my fondness for Cuba and unusual diving adventures.

Our first dive destination was to be the wreck of the *Sanchez Barcazategui*, a 19th-century Spanish mail ship that went down just outside Havana harbor while carrying a payroll for the Spanish garrison. To date, Carib sub divers have recovered some 14,000 silver coins from the wreck, with an estimated 20,000 coins still to be found.

At our hotel, we were greeted with a note from Keith Bolander, one of the owners of Scubacan and our host for this trip. "Morning dive has been delayed," the note read. Welcome to Cuba.

At breakfast the following morning, Keith spelled out the problem. The same day we arrived in Havana, the president of Carib Sub was fired, and as is the way in Cuba, the entire organization was shut down pending his replacement. Our hastily hatched plan B was to hire a boat from Gaviota, another branch of the government that has also become involved in recreational diving.

Although simple, this plan would require significant effort and a bit of luck. The fact that both organizations were part of the same all-encompassing socialist government did nothing

to expedite the numerous permissions and permits needed simply to transfer a divemaster from one boat to another. Supervisors had to call their supervisors, and morning turned to afternoon as we were shuffled through various layers of bureaucracy.

The short version of the story is that we waited two days for authorization to perform a simple switch of equipment and personnel. Yet despite the numerous governmental hoops, Keith and his partner, Tony, jumped through, we were ultimately denied access to the site.

That night, while sipping Havana Club rum and puffing Montecristo cigars, we reassessed our schedule. Keith remained apologetic about the delays, but we understood that this was typical of the Cuban system and merely part of the price of adventure.

While Keith and I discussed our second treasure wreck site, which was located about 100 miles west of Havana, Amos struck up a conversation with the hotel's diving instructor. When the subject of the forbidden payroll wreck came up, this individual claimed to have visited the site several times by swimming underwater from the harbor breakwater.

The muscular dive instructor then told of his service in the Cuban Navy, which included rebreather excursions into U.S.-held Guantanamo Bay to count warship hulls. Amos, who began his diving career with the Israeli Armed Forces, had apparently attracted a kindred spirit.

I informed the pair of retired combat swimmers that any clandestine insertions would have to wait until the following

TODAY, MY PREFERRED METHOD OF TRAVEL TO CUBA IS THROUGH SCUBACAN, A CANADIAN COMPANY THAT SPECIALIZES IN HOSTING AMERICAN DIVERS IN CUBA. ALLOWING THIS TORONTO-BASED ORGANIZATION TO HANDLE ALL ARRANGEMENTS WITHIN CUBA NOT ONLY KEEPS ME WITHIN THE LETTER OF THE LAW, IT PREVENTS MANY OF THE SCHEDULING AND LOGISTICS GLITCHES THAT CAN BE A ROUTINE PART OF THE CUBAN EXPERIENCE.

SPORTDIVERMAG.COM



TEN DAYS T

The distant



O WALINDI

edge of discovery: Papua New Guinea

Story and Photos by Michael P. O'Neill

In the last few decades, professional adventurers have conquered what the Drakes and Hillarys couldn't. In fast-forward mode, this well-heeled bunch climbed, crossed and dived the farthest corners of the planet.

They were, indeed, the first. However, mass tourism wasn't far behind, taming in the process once sacred ground: Alaska, the Serengeti and the Great Barrier Reef among them. Today, you can see all of these natural wonders from the comfort and safety of a 4WD or even a submarine, all the while drinking a soda or sipping a chardonnay. Imagine, you don't even have to get your new Timberlands dirty.

Despite this global stampede, I'm glad to report that Papua New Guinea remains unchanged and indomitable. To be completely honest, it's also very primitive and sometimes smelly and dangerous. When journeying there, you must leave your Americanisms at home, plain and simple. There's no script to follow, and uncountable variables can make or break a trip.

Divers and naturalists worship this former Australian possession and have been visiting for years. In other words, the trails are well marked. Nonetheless, the transition from expedition travel to mass tourism has yet to occur. This brief window of opportunity gives travelers — not tourists — the chance to participate in PNG's Age of Discovery, an incredible feat considering the 21st century looms just ahead. Offered an open seat on this great ride to adventure, I jump at the opportunity.

It's early May, and I'm booked on the legendary *Febrina* for a 10-day dive trip from Kavieng to Walindi. The Bismarck Sea and its islands, seamounts and reefs separate these two points on a map, a distance in the neighborhood of 200 miles. Those boarding the live-aboard know exactly what they're getting into; anyone embarking on such a trip should have done his or her homework well in advance.

We are spared the routine live-

aboard lecture, the dos and don'ts and what nots. "Just get in the water and have fun. The details will sort themselves later. By the way, we're at Echuca Pass, and there's a nice wreck somewhere up there," says Alan, the captain, well aware of what makes his clientele tick.

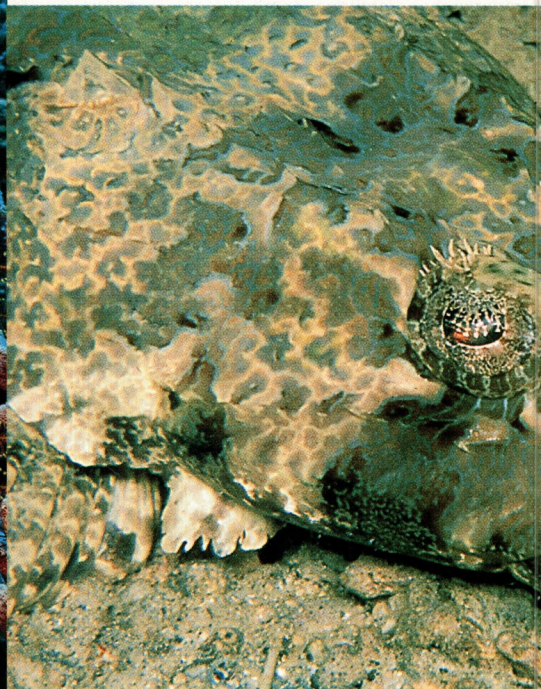
I don't even make it to the wreck of the *Der Yang*—too many distractions. Dog-tooth tuna and Spanish mackerel buzz by as they pursue fusiliers, while batfish, like miniature sails, tackle the stiff ocean current. At 75 feet, a red

ball on the reef gets my undivided attention, and I drift closer and learn that not all anemones are created equal. This specimen, protected by a pair of maroon clownfish, possesses a cherry-red coloring that's visible at depth but, as some photographers find out later that evening, completely absent on photographs taken with artificial light.

Over the years, the straits separating the islands of New Hanover and New Ireland earned a reputation as the meeting place for divers and sharks. In Kontu, a village nearby, "shark callers" even lasso the sleek predators after "calling" them to their dugout canoes using coconut shells. But things are changing, I'm afraid to say. The sharks are still there, all right, but they're now losing the popularity contest. Adding insult to injury, the popular victors barely measure one-half inch and are pink and fragile like crystal. This colony of pygmy seahorses was found living on a sea fan at Albatross Channel, ironically one of the biggest dives around.

After two days of riding the Kavieng currents, we depart for the Witu Islands, a 12-hour steam to the southwest. The rhythm of the *Febrina* breaking the glassy sea is highly con-

The Bismarck Sea off Papua New Guinea holds too many distractions for a photographer. From invertebrates to fishes, it's a new world.



ductive to catnapping and shooting the breeze.

OF ISLANDS AND MALARIA

During dinner that night, a well-traveled professor asks the captain about malaria and how the locals deal with it. The disease is definitely not out of mind, especially since one guest is very ill. Although he claims to have a very bad case of the flu, most on board are concerned that he may have something more serious.

"You Americans are so concerned about the bloody thing! Let me explain how difficult it is to get malaria ...," jokes Alan, filling his wine glass and sitting down at the edge of the table. With everybody's undivided attention, he eloquently lectures on the life and times of the *Anopheles* mosquito, the deadly *P. falciparum* malaria strain, and how we can be pushing up the daisies in just a few days if the chips line up just right — or wrong.

When we are about to call it a night, a face in the crowd volleys back the million-dollar question: "So, who of your crew has it?" The jovial atmosphere suddenly changes as we await the answer. The captain pauses, smiles and responds, "We all do."

Four days later, the sick guest is alive and diving. Lucky for him, because the Witu Islands are electrifying. The first morning there, I'm running slow

DIVE TRAVEL PLANNER

Papua New Guinea is definitely classic live-aboard territory. The backcountry lacks, for all practical purposes, everything, and boats travel considerable distances in their itineraries. But several strategically located dive resorts offer the same high-quality diving. Two of the most popular are Walindi Plantation and Loloata Island Resort.

Home base of the *Febrina*, Walindi Plantation is a small, exclusive resort that offers diving in Kimbe Bay. Right on the water, it consists of bungalows, an attractive indoor/outdoor eating area and bar, barbecue, swimming pool, gift shop and communications links to the outside world. It's immersed in the tropical jungle and a favorite among photographers.

Loloata Island Resort, located in Bootless Bay, is a 30-minute hop from Jackson's Airport in Port Moresby, PNG's

capital. Many divers prefer to spend their time in transit in Loloata instead of Port Moresby because of the exceptional diving at their doorstep, and they can stay away from the city.

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Fax: 675-321-7640
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and miss the pre-breakfast dive. "No worries," says Francis, the first mate. "Take your time and Dotty will save you a plate."

By the time everyone's back on board, I'm ready and have Crack-A-Fat Reef just for myself. The 87-degree water is much cooler than the air temperature and unbelievably refreshing.

Off the wall, a funnel cloud of chevron barracuda spirals counterclockwise and collides with big-eyetrevally rotating in the opposite direction. From my perch on the drop-off, I can see two perfect circles silhouetted against the sky. I finally shake off the trance and ascend to off-gas. A shift in the current brings the two schools my way for an encore. Forming a silver bullet, they shoot down, circling tightly within touching distance, their choreography impeccable. I wonder who's watching whom.

When I surface, a villager and her children are playing with Dotty on the dive platform. Working in the region for many years, the *Febrina* and crew developed close ties with the locals, a must to successfully operate in the outlying islands. In these parts, a random dive boat can't just find a reef and set up camp for the day. The captain must first get permission from the village chief, or "big man." To boot, the concept of law as we know it is basically non-existent. Instead, a "payback" system prevails.

In the region for many years, the live-aboard helps out villagers whenever possible. For the most part, it can navigate hassle-free most of the time. Notice I said "most."

THE BIG MAN

That afternoon, we finally meet a "big man." Anyone expecting a hulking warrior in full native regalia is disappointed. Instead, we are introduced to Dicky Doyles, a low-key Australian ex-pat who's been living on a copra

plantation since the beginning of time. His spread, facing a small bay and surrounded by spindly coconut palms, is idyllic, the rubble and black-sand bottom just beyond the beach nothing less than a "muck" heaven. Appropriately called Dicky's Place, the shallow site, deprived of color, coral and clear water, hosts a specialized community of highly camouflaged invertebrates and fish seldom seen on oceanic reefs. At first, newcomers to muck diving don't see what they're missing — liter-

Andrew, the divemaster, works the night-dive crew into a frenzy with wild tales of free-swimming Spanish dancers and psychedelic flatworms.

"You want spiny devilfish? I find him for you!" says the native while pointing to a picture in the fattest fish I.D. book I've ever seen.

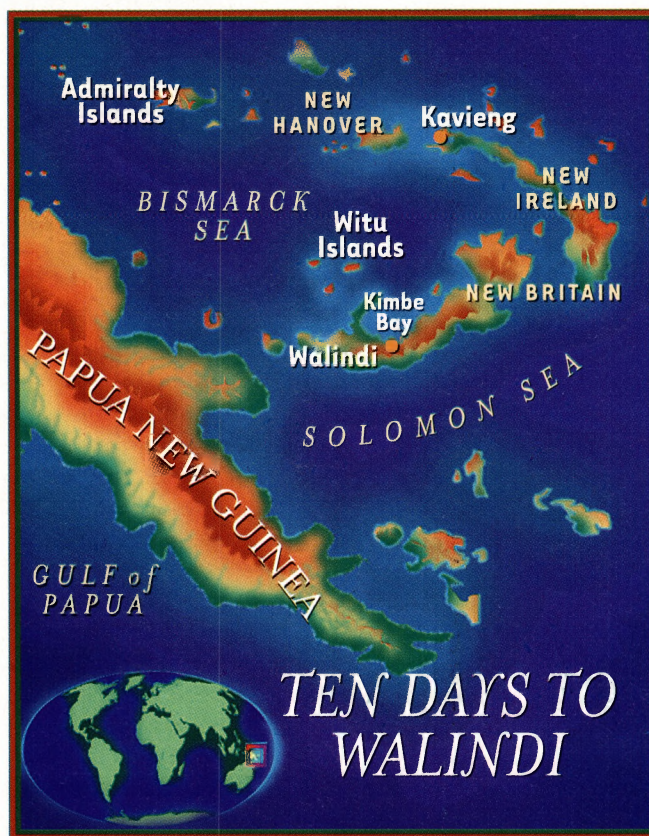
Known as *Inimicus* by the diving literati, the devilfish uses its hand-like fins to pull its expertly concealed body toward unsuspecting prey. Long, straight — and deadly — spines dangle from the hunter's back like *banderillas* in a bull's shoulder just before the *estocada*. Get too close and they rise, tough as nails, ready to puncture a careless hand.

Andrew's enthusiasm is contagious, and his five new best friends follow him to the dive deck. Minutes later, the hunt is on, and the divers' lights slice through the clear water like sabers. An electrical storm illuminates the dark sky, and underwater, flashing strobes discharge the same cold jolts.

The final round of dives on days nine and 10 in Kimbe proves that truth is stranger than fiction. The special-effects whiz kids in Hollywood will never match what Nature put in the Bismarck Sea: the pink stonefish at Inglis Shoals; the orange "slasher" mantis at Christine's Reef; and the

stately batfish at Susan's Reef. The cast of characters is endless. Scientists have catalogued more than 900 species of fish and more than 400 types of reef-building corals in Kimbe Bay alone, and more are certainly on the way.

The late Ned Gillette, a photographer, mountain climber, journalist and, above all, genuine explorer, once said that "we live in a time when you can no longer climb the highest peak nor explore blank spots on a map. Adventure is looking at old subjects in a new way, and there's still plenty left to do if you use your imagination." Or inspiration. PNG certainly has plenty of both. ■



ally — but soon catch on. In essence, this is hunting with a camera and staring at the bottom for hours, searching for subtle clues that betray invisible critters.

KIMBE BAY

Some 12 dives later, we depart for Kimbe Bay. On the final leg of our voyage, with New Britain in our sites, civilization seems like something from another world, conveniently forgotten and possibly extinct. At Restorf Island, a jungle-covered pinhead in the bay, a sea eagle eyes us suspiciously while the crew prepares the ship for the night. Around 6 p.m., the distant volcanoes block out the remaining sunlight, and

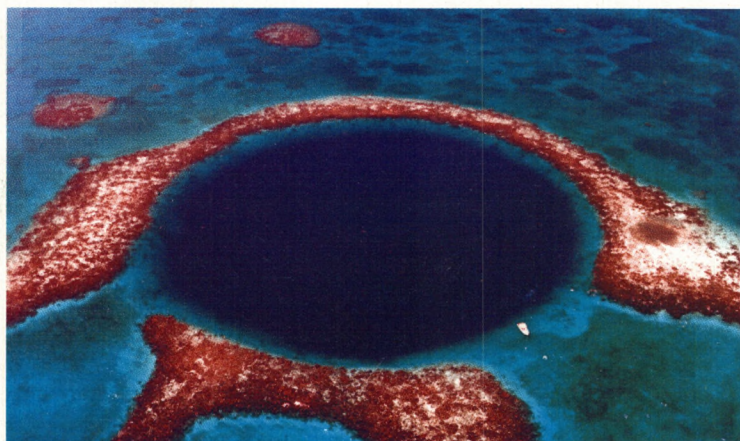
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REEF collaborators DeLoach and Humann will debut their new fish behavior book in time for Christmas.

Unusual Behavior

New book unveils reef mysteries

Most divers who call themselves naturalists are familiar with the Reef Environmental Education Foundation begun in 1991 by Paul Humann and Ned DeLoach. We've followed the evolution of their reef fish, creature and coral identification books, taken their courses, and performed their surveys.

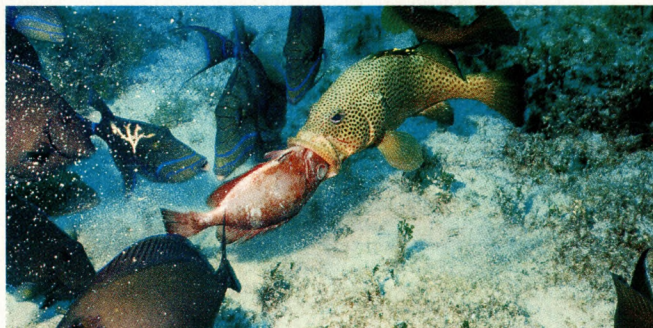
Now, we're ready for more, and after five years of research, so are DeLoach and Humann. Their *Reef Fish*

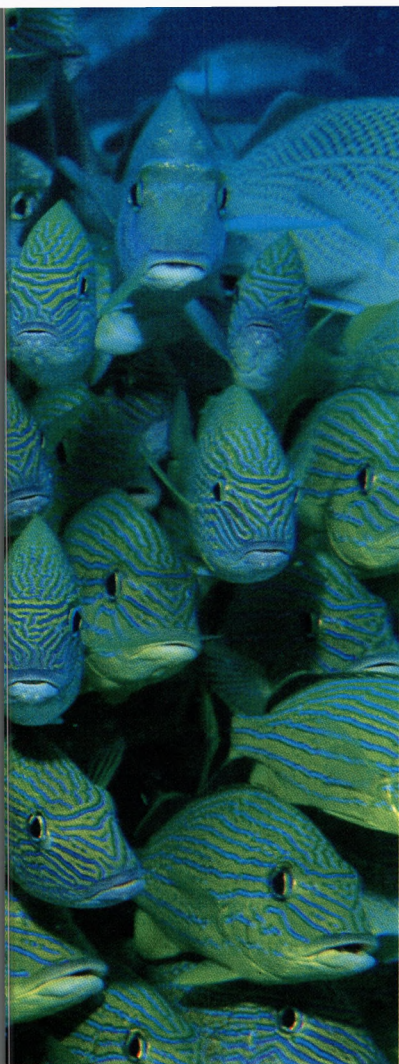
Behavior book debuts in dive shops and resorts by Christmastime (New World Publications, \$39.95). A pre-

liminary look at several chapters and the book's contents list shows a thorough 350-page guide to

everything from feeding behavior and symbiosis to senses and sound communication. But let's let author DeLoach tell you in his own words. Following is an edited excerpt from his author's note. Photos on these pages depict many of the topics also covered:

At left, a successful hunter is raided by nearly 30 reef fish marauders as it tries to ingest its prey. At right, tiny male sailfin blennies assume the attack mode, battling for possession of a shelter tube located near the nest of a female blenny.





Blue-striped grunts, nighttime feeders, spend the day resting in tightly knit schools near the protection of the reef. The fish use vision and lateral lines to maintain their precise position in the group.

Reef Fish Behavior is intended as an overview of what is presently known about the nature of reef fishes inhabiting the waters of Florida, the Caribbean and the Bahamas. The information included in the text came from two primary sources—four summers of



Although previously not documented to be cleaner fish, this terminal phase bluehead wrasse is obviously cleaning inside the open mouth of an obliging stoplight parrotfish.

underwater observation and photography in Bimini, Bahamas, and many hours of research in the library at the Rosentstiel School of Marine and Atmospheric Science, University of Miami. Extended stays in many other Caribbean countries rounded out five years of research and regional travel.

Video images, recorded by my wife, Anna, were used extensively to analyze behavior described in the text. Anecdotal observations gleaned from conversations with fish aficionados in the scientific, marine management, conservation, aquarium and diving fields add insight and spice to an otherwise data-dominated narrative.

Anna and I thoroughly enjoyed every facet of gathering the material for this book, but our four extended stays in south Bimini were magical times, when, as John Steinbeck

wrote: "the world spun in well-greased grooves."

We dived seven days a week, except during prolonged westerly blows. Although we observed interesting fish behavior throughout the day, we found fish watching best at sunset when the large predators prowl and many fishes court each other and spawn. Our most productive dusk dives had a marked tendency to occur on evenings of the seventh through the ninth day after the full moons of early spring to early summer.

When we began our research, we had little idea how much or what is known about reef fishes. At Rosentstiel, we dived into the journal-packed stacks with the same enthusiasm that kept us underwater for hours on end. We quickly discovered that, unlike terrestrial animals that have been observed

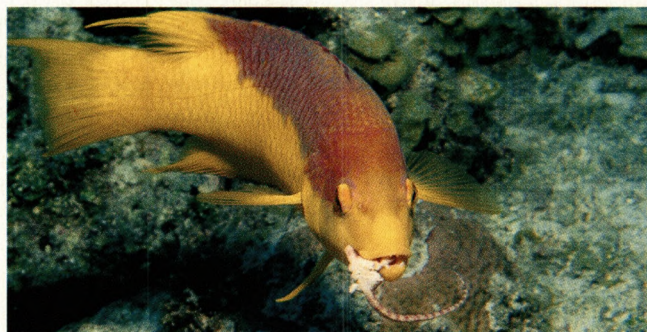
and documented for centuries, the study of coral reef animals is in its infancy. With little choice before the birth of scuba, just a half-century ago, marine biologists based much of their early research on preserved specimens from the reef.

Today's diving naturalists, whether scientifically trained or inquisitive amateurs, are pioneers chronicling the last great undocumented natural history on earth. It is an exciting time to be a diver. ■

More Info

Reef Fish Behavior will be on the shelves at dive retail stores and resorts by Christmas. The book costs \$39.95 and can also be ordered through New World Publications, 1861 Cornell Road, Jacksonville, FL 32207; 904-737-6558.

At left, cleaning gobies scamper over the head of a reverse-phase spotted moray, picking tiny parasites from its skin. At right, a crustacean-eating Spanish hogfish makes quick work of a brittle star plucked from a reef crevice.



Diving freedom got its start at Habitat. In Curaçao, that simply means dive-til-you-drop adventure.



Habitat Curaçao

Plan Your Own Dive; Dive Your Own Plan

Diving again?" the divemaster asks me as I attempt to slip unnoticed into the water for a solo dive. I nod sheepishly. These guys must have eyes in the backs of their heads. Not that diving solo here is taboo. To the contrary, it's encouraged. The aim of this vigilant staff is to ensure that divers have fun in the water and to give

them the best value for their money. At Habitat Curaçao, they call it "diving freedom." I call it being treated like an adult.

"When you rent a car," explains Mike Stafford, Habitat's dive operations manager and acting assistant manager, "you show a license, sign the forms and drive away. No one questions your driving abilities or mandates that someone accompany you."

He continues: "Captain

Don coined the phrase years ago when he created Habitat in Bonaire. Although ownership changed and we're the new sister resort (we swap boats or parts regularly), the name and theory remain. Once certified divers attend our orientation, they're responsible for planning their own profile and free to enjoy the sport."

I watch as guests gather at the dock; some are back for the third time. It's a first for the majority. A stateside

dive operator who schedules regular trips here accompanies another group recently certified in nitrox. Mike shows the newcomers the wet room and fill station, organized areas where they can hang and stow gear and find and return scuba tanks. Outside hangs a huge sign-up board for boat dives. He points to the house reef, *Nos Cas* in Papiamentu, the Antillean language.

According to several dive operations on the

island, it's one of the nicest.

Habitat's divers can get there by following a rope that leads 100 yards from the jetty ladder to the reef, which starts at 30 feet deep. The line ends at 105 feet; the wall continues to slope to 150, drops to a step at 250 feet and then plunges to 6,000.

The day before, Mike, his friend Vicki and I dived southeast of the rope, finding massive orange elephant-ear sponges and long tube sponges amid mountainous star and soft coral. Accustomed to divers, trumpetfish, soldierfish and parrotfish are almost touchable. Visibility is astounding; it's like Cozumel without the



Though natural reef life may not be quite as plentiful as at Curaçao's Seaquarium (above), divers still find all the entertainment they can handle with ample shore diving.

current. I'm told that two 6-foot resident green morays often swim with divers. We're graced with the presence of only one.

Nighttime along this "Divers' Highway" reveals an eruption of color under my lights, as well as lobsters, octopus and shrimp. That rope is, in fact, a welcome navigation device. My light faithfully trained on it, I return to the jetty where a school of squid is suspended below the surface. Lateral

fins rippling, they turn an array of colors when I appear and, as I move closer, jet backward into the darkness.

Mike is halfway through the orientation when a couple expresses apprehension about diving on their own. Mike reminds them of the flexibility at Habitat — they're free to sign up for a two-tank boat dive at 8:30 a.m. or at 1:30 p.m. Both 40-foot crafts have cabins, fly bridges and shaded deck space, side tank racks and platform ladders to allow divers to enter and exit the water easily.

There are always staff members, both in the water and on the boat. Divemasters

know every niche of the 50-plus sites. They're all happy to point out interesting creatures. Divers are welcome to follow them or strike out on their own. But if they do, they're asked to respect the environment. Touching isn't tolerated.

The honor system works. During one dive, I spot a yellow seahorse. Its prehensile tail is curled around a branch interlaced with a tangle of candelabra coral, which makes the fish difficult to photograph. I'm alone. No one from the boat is in sight. It would be easy to reposition it in an open space and film it properly. Lining up the best possible angle, I shoot and

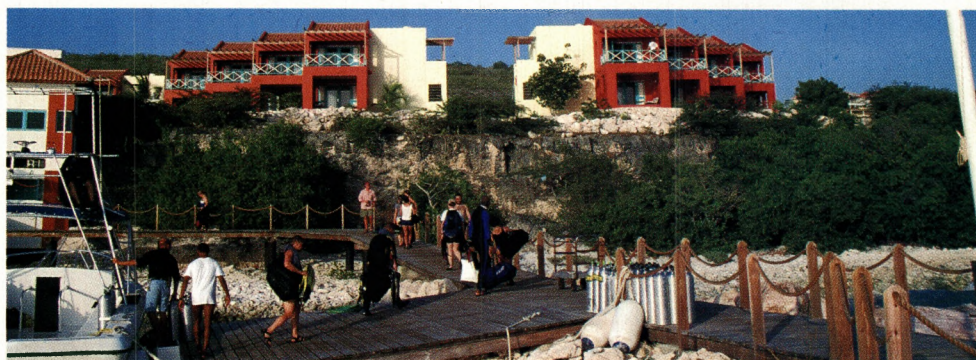
pat myself on the back for leaving it in place.

Mike concludes his talk in the fill station, where an ANX Supreme cranks out partial pressure nitrox fills. I listen in on my way to the wet room. Maybe a nitrox course one day ...

I notice that Johan is giving the "rusty" couple a free refresher course. With more experience, they might even become comfortable diving solo. They may even find where Habitat's frogfish has relocated. Where is that frogfish?

My reverie about my last dive is interrupted as Johan asks, "You going out again, Denise?"

"You bet," I reply. ■



Habitat Curaçao

Habitat Curaçao is part of Coral Estate, 141 acres on the southwest coast of the island of Curaçao. Guests are ushered to their apartments through an open lobby, past tree-lined paths, over arched wooden bridges and around a freshwater pool. Stylishly painted red, white and turquoise, two-story junior suites zigzag along either side of a bluff facing the sea. Each of the 56 air-conditioned rooms has a patio, kitchenette, two queen-size beds, telephone and full bath. Rum Runners restaurant, on the premises, serves a variety of foods.

The resort is a full-service facility dedicated to divers, with a shop, photo lab and classroom, where courses are taught in English, Dutch, Spanish, German and Papiamentu. Cameras and scuba equipment are available for rent. All members of the staff are trained in CPR and first aid, and there are two recompression chambers on the island. Cars and mountain bikes can be rented, and walking tours are conducted weekly. A free shuttle transports guests three times a day to the town of Willemstad, 20 minutes away.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

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Visit Habitat's Web site at www.habitatdiveresorts.com. For the newsletter, *Habitat Curaçao*, *The Freedom Journal*, visit divecuracao@habitatdiveresorts.com.

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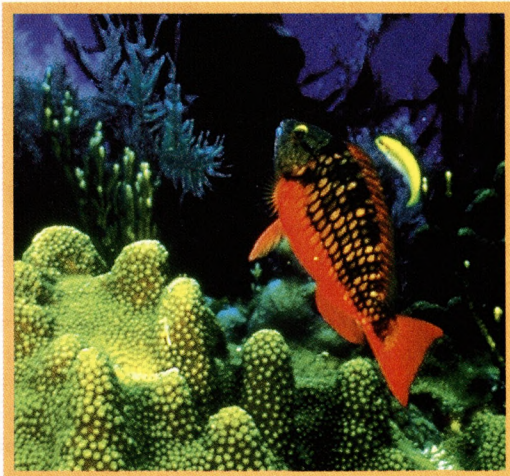
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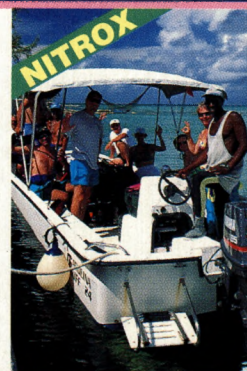
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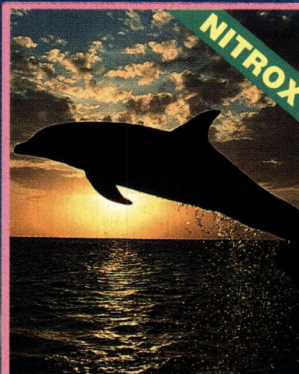
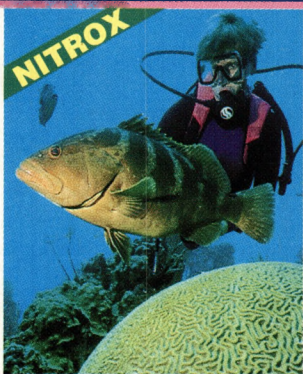
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Take your best shot on Bonaire. Pro Tip #5.

PRO-PHOTOGRAPHER'S TIPS ON SHOOTING BIG ANIMALS IN BONAIRE

Shooting large animals underwater can be perhaps the most challenging of all underwater photography subjects. Here's how to shoot big animals like the pros in Bonaire:

- Tip 1: Get close, stay calm, be patient. Above all, be patient. It may take a while to maneuver yourself and your subject into close proximity, so plan your movements, watch and be ready for that one great shot.
- Tip 2: Use your buddy to assist in shooting the subject. Without harassing the animal, gently have your buddy swim in strategic directions to help the subject into position.
- Tip 3: The same applies to big animals as to blue water wrecks, try to do most of your shooting between 10am and 2pm to get the most help from the sun.
- Tip 4: Try to get within 3-4 feet from the subject. This will keep the animal bright against the blue water, as that, many times, is what you will have to work with as a background. Watch your buoyancy—you will most likely be in deep water!
- Tip 5: When using a 15mm lens, set the f-stop at the appropriate setting for the blue water in the background. Check your strobe exposure table for the appropriate f-stop.

This is the fifth in a six-part series on how the pros shoot world-class photos in Bonaire. Photo Pros from around the world come to Bonaire for the year-around excellent water conditions. Top-rate photo facilities are readily available, so take your best shot on Bonaire!

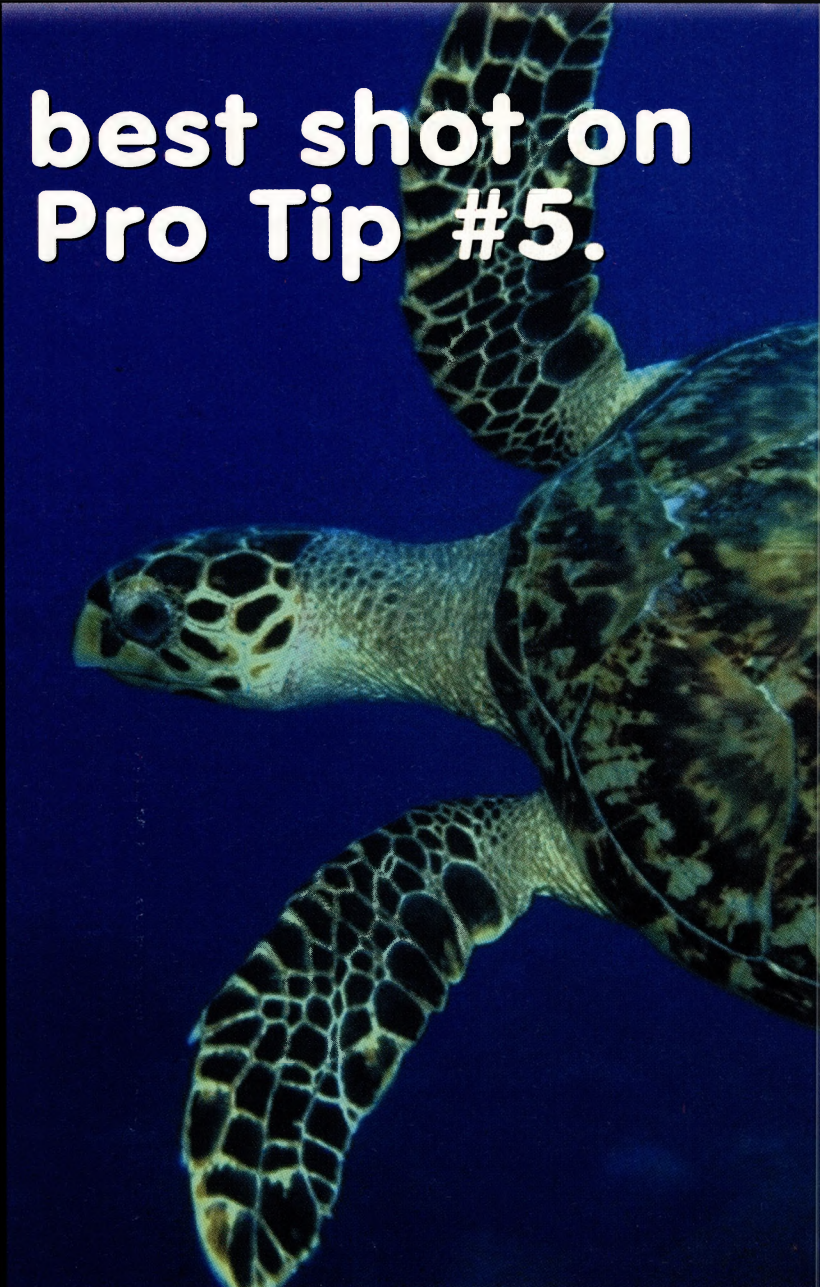
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From fun vacations in the Caribbean sun to fabulous deals in the Far East, here is the latest news from around the diving world.

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The Oak Bay Resort on Roatan, Bay Islands, is now all-inclusive with a special promotion starting Nov. 28. Price is \$385 per person for all meals, boat and shore diving. OII-504-435-2337; e-mail: ah6pn@arrl.net.

BONAIRE

SAND DOLLAR CELEBRATES A FACELIFT

The Sand Dollar Condominium Resort on Bonaire, a great place for families, couples or groups, has undergone a facelift. A warm color palette gives a refreshing new look to the buildings. To celebrate, the resort is offering the seventh night free on any prepaid packages from Dec. 1-5. 800-288-4773; e-mail: info@sanddollar-bonaire.com; www.sanddollar-bonaire.com.

THE CAYMAN ISLANDS

SUNSET HOUSE EXTENDS RATES

Grand Cayman's Sunset House announces that 1999 summer season rates for hotel and diving have been extended until Dec. 23. Book a package anytime between now and Dec. 23 and receive the summer season rates, even though everyone else is charging winter rates. This will allow those who want a great vacation before the millennium to do so at good prices and with no crowds. Additional booking information can be obtained through your travel professional or by contacting the North American booking office for Sunset House, Maduro Dive Travel at 800-854-4767 or by e-mail at maduro@netpoint.net.

Blue Whales

STORY & PHOTO BY AMOS NACHOUM

"Get closer, get closer!" I shouted, somewhat in vain. In the excitement of the moment, I had forgotten that Loreto, my captain and guide, spoke no English. It didn't matter.

In the water directly in front of our boat was a mature blue whale, the largest living creature on earth and the first live one I had ever seen in all my decades of diving the oceans of the world. And I was about to slip into the water with it.

I was in an open 28-foot dinghy out of Loreto, Baja California, with my friend and divemaster, Eran Lavee. I had heard that blues had been spotted migrating to this area to feed on the upwelling of krill and to give birth. As if further confirmation was needed, rising out of the water directly in front of me was a pair of flukes that stretched nearly 20 feet across. As we crept in closer, the whale exhaled, generating a sound like an 18-wheeler locking up its brakes at 50 miles an hour.

I was so entranced by the sight, I forgot to take a picture. The largest living creatures on earth, with a small but slowly increasing worldwide population estimated at 1,000-3,000 individuals, blue whales can reach nearly 100 feet in length and weigh more than 100 tons.

We stayed with the one ahead of us for a while before it sounded. Twenty minutes later, Loreto, with his lifetime of fisherman's instincts, located it again. This time, I remembered to take some pictures, snapping the whale from multiple angles in an attempt to record its majesty. Like words, my camera seemed inadequate to capture the graceful, sublime creature. Only a 16-mm fisheye lens came close to doing so.

In three weeks of searching among islands and the rugged coast, we had the joy of encountering numerous blues, not only solitary travelers but also mothers with calves, and sometimes groups of three or four. In addition to blues, we also encountered fin whales up to 60 feet in length, smaller minkes and grays. The entire experience contributed to the most challenging and rewarding experience I have had in the wild.

To join Amos Nachoum on a blue whale photo expedition in February 2000, contact Predators, Mammals & Us, 2000 Broadway, Suite 1204, San Francisco, CA 94115; 877-229-4253; Web: www.biganimals.com; e-mail: amosphoto@mindspring.com. Amos will host three guests for two eight-day excursions. Cost is \$4,500 per person.

For a group whale-watching program, please contact Baja Outpost: www.bajaoutpost.com or e-mail: outpost@bajaoutpost.com.

The Ocean Corporation



What are the odds of your becoming a commercial diver in today's market? Pretty good if you happen to choose—and graduate from—The Ocean Corporation.

Located on the Gulf of Mexico (commercial diving central), The Ocean Corporation consistently locates more jobs than they can provide graduates for. . . perhaps because there are more than 30 diving companies located within 325 miles of the school's Houston base. Approximately one-third of all entry-level commercial divers entering the industry learn how it's done at The Ocean Corporation.

The list of accomplishments that The Ocean Corporation and its students have piled up is an impressive recommendation in itself: the first commercial bell diver program, the first US dives inside a nuclear power plant (and the first school to offer training for that), the first school to include surface welding as part of the diver training program. . . the lists of firsts goes on and on. The professionalism of The Ocean Corporation was further illustrated when they became instrumental in developing the training standards for entry-level commercial divers for the American National Standards Institute (ANSI).

If it's a career in commercial diving, there's not much of a question on where to go: The Ocean Corporation. For further information contact them at: 1-800-321-0298.

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RED SAIL'S PASSPORT TO PARADISE

Red Sail Sports (Grand Cayman) is expanding its special Fall Dive Package to include accommodations at Indies Suites. Being offered now through Dec. 19, the Passport to Paradise package offers rates starting at \$417 for four days/three nights, including accommodations at Indies Suites. Special rates are also being offered at the Westin Casuarina, Hyatt Regency or Marriott Beach Resort starting at \$434 for four days/three nights. Package includes two-tank dives, disposable camera, unlimited shore diving and a passport filled with island-wide discounts. Most significant is a 50-percent discount on a Discover Scuba Resort Course. 877-RED-SAIL; www.redsail.com.

MILLENNIUM CELEBRATIONS UPDATE

Grand Cayman Marriott Beach Resort's "Party of the Century" features a champagne reception, seaside buffets, music and gourmet menu in the Grille Restaurant. Holiday rates available from Dec. 20 - Jan. 3, 2000 (seven-night minimum applies). 345-949-0088.

HIGH TECH COMES TO REEF PHOTO

Slide scanning is now available at Reef Photo & Video located at the Little Cayman Beach Resort. The Nikon LS2000 Film Scanner and a Dell computer are being used for the system and will enable Reef Photo to scan slides at extremely high resolutions.

NORTHWEST SCHEDULE RESUMES

Effective Dec. 17 through April 1, 2000, daily flights from Detroit at 9:30 a.m. will arrive on Grand Cayman at 1:20 p.m. Daily departures from Grand Cayman are at 2:45 p.m. with an arrival in Detroit at 6:42 p.m.

ARUBA

NEW AIR SERVICE THROUGH TWA

A new partnership between Aruba and Trans World Airlines will offer daily service to the island beginning Nov. 1 through San Juan, Puerto Rico. TWA is expanding its fleet to one new plane every 10 days in 1999, and Aruba is adding a new airport facility at the Queen Beatrix International Airport. TWA will operate new state-of-the-art MD-80 aircraft from San Juan to Aruba, providing more seats in its expanded first-class section. Nonstop service will include flights from Los Angeles, Fort Lauderdale, St. Louis, Boston and New York City to San Juan and then connecting to Aruba. 800-TO-ARUBA; www.aruba.com.

DELTA AIRLINES ANNOUNCES FLIGHTS

Daily service from Atlanta to the Caribbean will begin on Dec. 1, with non-stop service from Atlanta to Aruba and Atlanta to St. Maarten. Both routes will operate daily until April 30, 2000, when they will operate twice a week on Saturdays and Sundays.

TURKS AND CAICOS

NEW PARTNERSHIP FOR SALT CAY DIVERS

Salt Cay Divers has been approved for a new dive shop directly on the beach, making diving access easy. The facility will offer a covered gazebo and refreshments. There is also a new partnership with Trade Winds Lodge that offers lodging options for divers. Trade Winds Lodge sits on the beach and is expected to be complete in time for the January-March humpback-whale season. Specials to be announced. Salt Cay Divers: 649-946-6906; e-mail: scdivers@tcway.tc.

DIVE PROVO "SCUBA SAFARI MONTH"

Diving guests booking a five-, six- or seven-night stay with diving at Dive Provo during November will be able to upgrade to one of Dive Provo's famed "Scuba Safari" voyages at no additional cost. Those participating have an extended day of diving (normally \$129 if purchased separately) to some of the more remote and uncharted dive sites surrounding the island. 800-234-7768; www.diveprovo.com.

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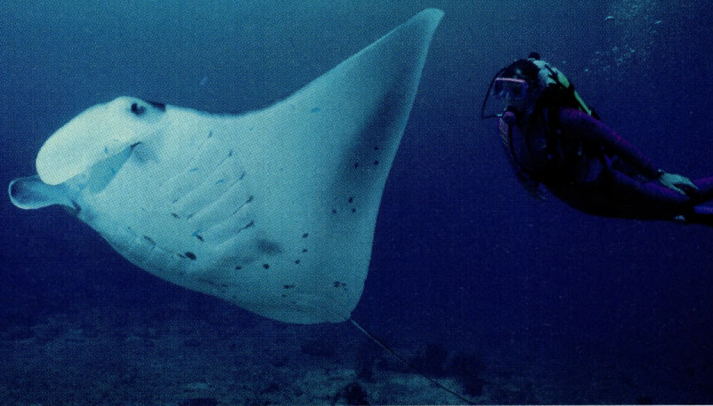
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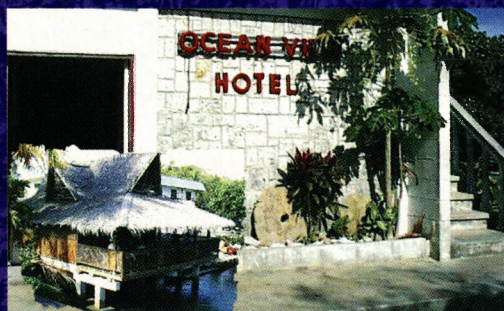
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Anse Chastanet, St. Lucia's unique scuba hideaway resort, has introduced its "Scuba Escape" winter packages for individual travelers. From Jan. 8, 2000, a seven-night, 12-dive package starts at \$1849 p.p./d.o. including transfers, meals, tax and service charges. Other packages and group rates are available. 800-737-3483; www.ansechastanet.com.

AT JALOUSIE SCUBA'S COOL

Jalousie Hilton Resort & Spa St. Lucia has launched a new scuba school and dive program for teens 12 and over. Classes are conducted from the beach or on the resort's dive boat to more than 14 dive sites.

"Scuba's Cool" classes cost \$425 per teen and include a PADI diving certificate for those who pass. Jalousie also offers a special family dive package that includes five nights accommodation, six dives, breakfast and

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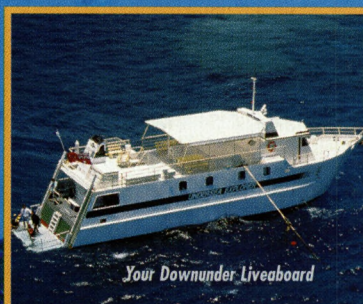
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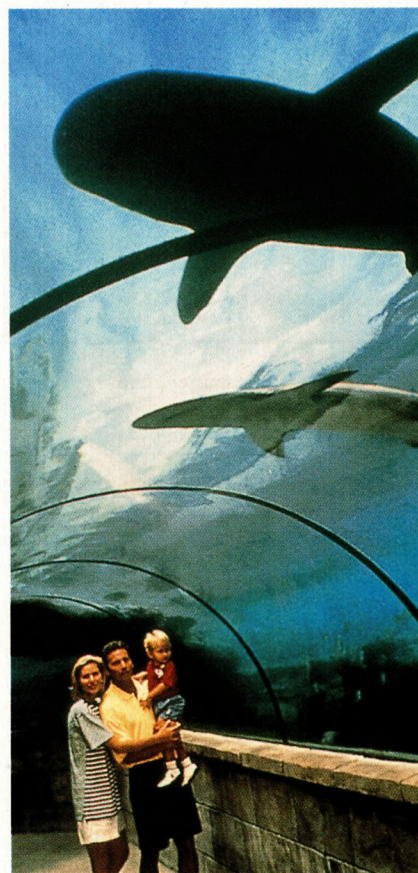
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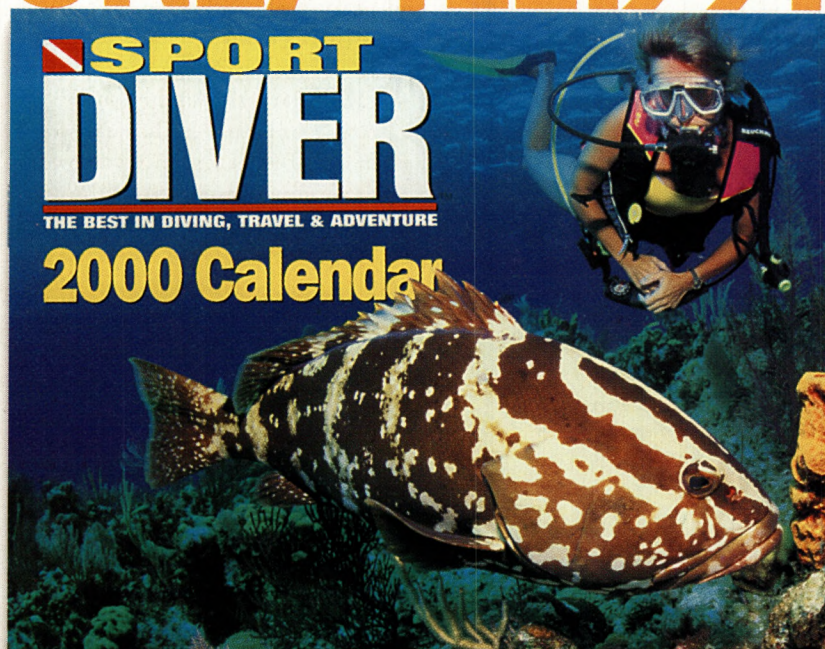
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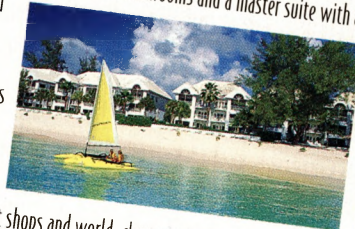
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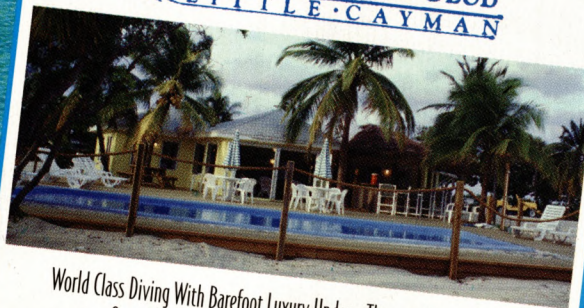
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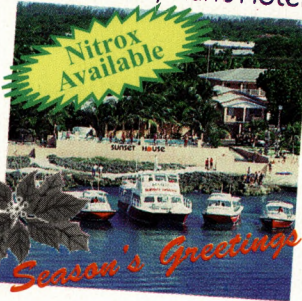
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where maximum depth is 12 feet. Here, damsels, banded butterflyfish, bluehead wrasse and royal gramma vie for choice spots to hide in as they cruise in the rocky shadows.

Schoolmaster and yellowtail snapper, porkfish and porgies rove the rocks' perimeters, keeping vigil over the sandy bottom. Although the water remains crystal clear, snorkelers grab only fleeting glimpses of blue runners, yellowfin mojarra and mutton snapper that remain on the fringe, curious but not as social as the other inhabitants.

Snorkelers share Paradise Lagoon with pedal boats and kayaks, but there's plenty of room for all. No motorized craft are allowed. Atlantis offers scuba lessons and dives with local operators who explore reefs off nearby Rose Island. Although there are no reefs close to Paradise Beach, large rock formations in 4 to 6 feet of water provide homes for a variety of tropicals and more fish-watching fun for the whole family.

For details on Atlantis, call 800-ATLANTIS or go on line at www.sunint.com.

DESTINATION

PACIFIC/ASIA

PALAU/TRUK

DIVE INTO THE MILLENNIUM

Space is available on the special Aggressor Fleet Millennium Dive Charters in Palau and Truk aboard the luxurious *Palau* and *Truk Aggressors II* live-aboards. You may have seen the *Truk Aggressor II* recently when it was home to cinematographer Al Giddings and his crew during the Discovery Channel's *Shark Week* broadcast live off Bikini Atoll.

The package will feature a New Year's Eve celebration with a champagne breakfast at sunrise, a complimentary Eagle Creek Dry Bottom Duffle to all guests, free slide developing and a drawing for a \$200 discount off any Aggressor Fleet charter in the Pacific during the year 2000. These week-long luxury charters are limited to 16 passengers and are



Ginnie Springs RESORT

Explore Ginnie Springs Resort, the world's favorite freshwater dive. Enjoy crystal-clear spring water that's always 72°. Forget about wind and waves—there aren't any. Set amid 200 acres of forest, our seven natural springs offer something for every diver. Instructors find the shallow spring basins perfect for training. At Ginnie's main spring, certified divers can safely explore a breathtaking cavern without special training. Want to dive the exciting Devil's Eye cave system? We offer among the finest Cave Diver training available. Ginnie Springs Resort is right on your way to or from the Keys. Call for a free brochure or visit our website. You'll discover why we are the favorite freshwater site of divers around the world.

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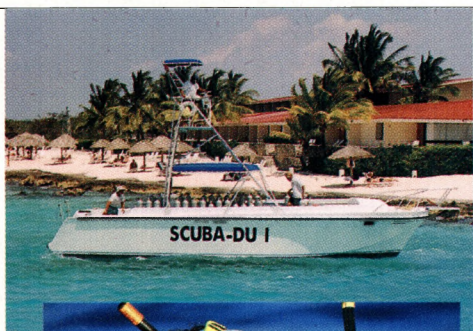
Enjoy the world's best scuba diving without getting soaked.

When you are looking to experience the ultimate in Scuba Diving and Accommodations in Cozumel: Vacation at the Island's only AAA/Four Diamond Resort. Located on the south side of the Island near the World-class Reefs that made Cozumel famous. Ranked number 1 Dive Resort in the World by Rodale's 1997 reader survey. The Presidente offers the top accommodations and amenities expected of the Inter Continental Family.



Scuba Du is a PADI and NAUI Dive Center located on the property and offers two half-day departures daily with five customized modern dive boats that for your comfort and safety are never crowded. Certifications and referrals, storage facilities, night dives, snorkeling trips, rentals, personalized service, private charters and great shore diving. Dive Packages are available.

Internet: <http://www.interconti.com> or <http://www.cozumel.net/scubadu>
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1-800-372-0200

priced at \$2,295p.p./d.o. 800-348-5662; e-mail: livedive@compuserve.com.

KOSRAE

KOSRAE VILLAGE'S MILLENNIUM SPECIAL

Stay in traditional thatch-roof bungalows at the ocean's edge. Price includes lodging and a daily two-tank boat dive with Sleeping Lady Divers, Kosrae's only PADI five-star dive center. Includes tanks, weights and a picnic lunch. Only \$119.95 per person, per day based on double occupancy. Rates on Sundays are only \$47.50 per person, double occupancy for guest stays during December 1999 and January 2000. 011-691-370-3483; e-mail: info@KosraeVillage.com; www.kosraevillage.com.

DESTINATION

EUROPE

ICELAND

FOLLOW THE PASSAGE OF THE VIKINGS

A thousand years have passed since Leif Ericsson and his Vikings ruled the seas, performing great feats of seamanship and adventure. In celebration of those intrepid Norsemen and their many North Atlantic discoveries, Zegrahm Expeditions is offering two expeditions, the "Voyage from the Scottish Isles to Iceland" from June 5-19, 2000 and the "Circumnavigation of Iceland with the Faroes" from June 15-29, 2000.

Both voyages are on the 98-passenger *M/S Explorer*, with accommodations in outside-view cabins and suites, all with private facilities. Passengers will explore Viking ruins, history and culture of the region, whales, glaciers, geysers, indigenous wildlife and more.

From the majestic extinct volcano featured in Jules Verne's *Journey to the Center of the Earth* to Reykjavik's spectacular Geysir area to towering seaside pillars of basalt, passengers can expect six days of breathtaking sights.

Expeditions start at \$5,490 per person/double occupancy. Airfare is not included. Call 800-628-8747; or e-mail: zoe@zeco.com; www.zeco.com.



BLUE WATER DIVERS

Grand Turk, Turks and Caicos Islands

If your Top 10 list for dive destinations includes spectacular coral walls, picturesque island nature and a humorous host, you will have to hook up with Mitch Rolling at Blue Water Divers on Grand Turk. Step onto Mitch's dive boat, and you'll find a knowledgeable guide who serves up a side of one-liners, impressions and folksy tunes.

For 20 years, Mitch has dived the precipitous and lush Grand Turk wall and has built his operation to include three boats and a staff of professional, experienced Turks Islanders. The Grand Turk wall is well known for its black coral and gorgonians, a steep drop, healthy soft and hard coral growth and plentiful marine life. During winter, divers are treated to a procession of migrating humpback whales.

Situated near the Turks and Caicos National Museum, and with a booking office and retail shop at the Salt Raker Inn, Blue Waters Divers is readily accessible and will pick you up by boat from the beach or by truck from your hotel. Daily two-tank morning dives on the wall begin at 9 a.m.; afternoon and night dives are booked by request.

Equipment rental and dive packages that include unlimited shore diving are

available. New divers can experience the wall with a resort course, and instruction through the level of divemaster can be arranged for advanced divers.

If you love the water but aren't ready to plunge past 10 feet, you won't be left behind. Snorkelers are welcome on the dive boats for \$10 to \$15 including equipment.

Blue Water Divers also offers a variety of excursions to nearby cays that will enhance your Turks and Caicos experience. Take a trip to Gibb's Cay and watch friendly stingrays feed; snorkel above hard and soft corals, and look for turtles and the occasional shark. The price is \$40.

Another stop is nearby Salt Cay for more wall diving and snorkeling. Hop off the boat for lunch at the Mt. Pleasant Guest House, or explore the island on foot or with a guide. The Salt Cay excursion is \$45 and does not include diving and lunch; tours are optional. Two other popular jaunts include the day trip to South Caicos and a visit to the Endymion wreck. At South Caicos, the surge and current encourage the appearance of eagle rays and sharks. The price is \$60 plus dives.

The *Endymion*, a British warship that sank in 1790, is located in 25 feet of water and is encrusted with coral. The ship's

remnants — a dozen large cannons and several huge anchors — are protected from salvors. Cost is \$70 plus dives for the full-day trip.

Blue Water Divers and Mitch Rolling are ready to show you all that Grand Turk has to offer. Let the blue water, the relaxing atmosphere and the experienced dive staff show you the wonders of the underwater world of the Turks and Caicos.



AT A GLANCE

BLUE WATER DIVERS

For more information and reservations: 649-946-2260

e-mail: mrolling@tcway.tc

Web: www.microplan.com/bluerake.htm



ANSE CHASTANET

St. Lucia

Do you dream of sweet ocean breezes drifting by, of the gentle, lolling sound of the waves making their mark on the sandy shore? How about world-class diving only yards from the private beach? Dream no more, for all this and more awaits you at one of the Caribbean's most romantic resorts -- Anse Chastanet on the island of St. Lucia. Anse Chastanet's unique blend of architecture and nature envelops guests with wonderful amenities, gourmet cuisine and pampering at its finest. The Anse Chastanet Reef, located right off the water's edge, lures guests into St. Lucia's amazing underwater world. Divers of all experience levels will enjoy the rich marine life that includes myriad hard corals, morays, parrotfish, sponges, and more. The resort's on-site dive center, Scuba St. Lucia, is a

SSI Platinum/PADI center, offering boat, beach, night and wreck dives to the Lesleen M and Daini-Koyo Maru. All dives are escorted including the required beach orientation dive.

At the on-site service and retail center, equipment rental, camera rental and E6 slide processing are available as well as repairs. Qualified SSI/PADI/NAUI personnel teach classes from the resort course to Assistant Instructor. Non-divers will enjoy daily escorted boat snorkel trips to the nearby reefs at \$15 per trip.

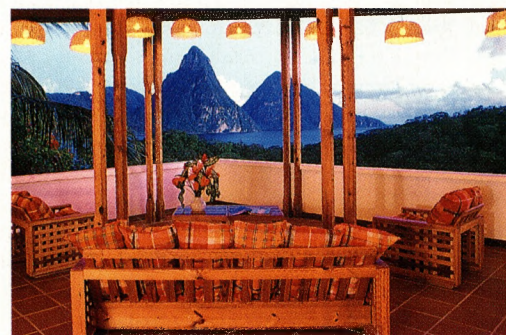
The resort's 49 octagonal gazebos and individually designed suites are nestled into the lush hillside, while the beachside rooms set amid the tropical gardens are only steps away from the ocean. Rooms

include a refrigerator, electric kettle, tea/coffee, in-room safes, wall-mounted hair dryers, ceiling fans, glass or wooden louvered windows and private showers.

Each room is unique, from the premium hillside rooms to the suites, all designed by owner/architect Nick Troubetzkoy. The draw of the rooms is their openness. There are roof dormers, partial or removed fourth walls and large balconies, all designed to bring guests closer to the view of St. Lucia's twin Piton mountains or the surrounding gardens. Restaurants at Anse are the Piton, which serves breakfast and dinner, and the Trou au Diable Beach restaurant for lunch and dinner. There are also two bars, the Piton and the Beach Bar.

When you're ready to step outside your gazebo and take in St. Lucia, there's plenty to do. Complimentary beach chairs and towels, non-escorted beach snorkeling, wind surfing, sunfish sailing, ocean kayaking and day cruises aboard the resort's 37-foot sailing yacht (\$65 including lunch), are great ways to explore. St. Lucia's topside has much to offer, and a variety of excursions is available through the resort. There's shopping in Castries, sulfur and mineral baths, rain forests, arts and crafts, and horseback riding. After a tough day of diving or soaking up the sun, you can really submit to life's little pleasures at the mini spa. Get pampered with a relaxing facial or manicure along with several other treatments. Honeymooners and other romantics may want to try the "couples simultaneous massage."

The resort offers dive specials that include seven nights' accommodations, 12 dives, all meals, ground transfers, taxes and service charges. Call Ultimate Dive Travel at 800-737-DIVE.



AT A GLANCE

BRAC REEF BEACH RESORT

For more information and reservations: 800-737-DIVE; udive@flash.net; www.ultimatedivetour.com.

PARADISUS COZUMEL

Cozumel, Mexico



Want a Caribbean vacation at a resort that combines the luxury of a cruise with the versatility of being on land? The Paradisus Cozumel (formerly Melia Mayan Paradisus), located on the northwest side of the island of Cozumel, is the ideal spot to choose whatever activity (or inactivity) you have in mind at an affordable price.

There are 150 deluxe air-conditioned units at the five-star resort, each with a terrace or balcony, satellite TV and phone. The accommodations are just a few minutes walk to the long stretch of glistening white beach, the hotel facilities, restaurants and bars.

At Paradisus, you can swim in one of two pools, snorkel in the ocean, take an introductory lesson in scuba diving, go windsurfing, kayaking or sail a sunfish. There are two courts for tennis buffs, step and water aerobics classes, daily bicycle and horseback riding tours, and the full-sized gym and steam bath is open until 9 p.m. You can end your busy schedule with a nightly show, disco or karaoke at the Club Fantasia.

No vacation is complete without excellent meals and snack, and Paradisus provides fine dining from about 6 a.m. until 11 p.m. A delicious variety of dishes are served buffet style for breakfast, lunch and dinner at La Isla. Giant, gaily colored papier mache fish and parrots float suspended from the building's vaulted, thatched roof. The room is surrounded on three sides with floor-to-ceiling

windows and by a portico set with additional table for those who want to take full advantage of the ocean or pool-side breezes.

In case sun, air and exercise (or an iron will at breakfast) has rendered you weak and wobbly, La Iguana is open from 11 a.m. until 6:30 p.m. This rustic snack bar is on the beach and serves light meals and "in-betweens."

Tropical flowers line the path, which leads to a bridge across a lagoon and into Café Paraiso, the resort's gourmet restaurant. The room's singular illumination and focal point is a six-foot, freshwater tank with exotic Yucatan fish gliding through a miniature Mayan ruin. The warm glow of candles enhances elegant table settings. Dining is table d'hôte—usually a choice of appetizers, soups or salads, entrees and desserts—all exquisitely prepared and served. Reservations are required and a dress code is suggested.

The service is impeccable at Paradisus Cozumel, and the bilingual staff is ever-attentive. They're helpful in arranging tours and giving information about this friendly island. The town of San Miguel is only 3.6 miles away and is easily and reasonably accessible by taxi. In addition to the multitude of shops and restaurants, the Museum of Cozumel is definitely worth a visit to learn about its reefs, its Mayan history and the island's development. If you rent a car or scooter and tour the island on your own, stop at San Gervasio, the most

notable Mayan ruin. And don't worry about staying out late. The town is safe and nightlife continues until about 3 a.m.

Even though there are sufficient programs at Paradisus Cozumel to keep both children and adults content, many guests come to dive Cozumel's southwestern section—one of the great barrier reefs of the world. The staff is happy to arrange dive trips with an international team of American, European, and Mexican dive operators dedicated to providing First Class service. Small groups under careful supervision are taken to the famous Planacar Reef and to Santa Rosa wall. Certification courses are offered as well.

Whether traveling with your family on a holiday, in a group, at a convention or on a honeymoon, young, or young at heart, the Paradisus Cozumel is the perfect place to rev up or wind down in luxury. It's well named—Paradise—in Cozumel.



AT A GLANCE

PARADISUS COZUMEL

For information, call 888-341-5993, email: paradisus@cozumel.com.mx; www.iminet.com/mexico/coz203.html

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407/628-4802 ext. 1182 or email

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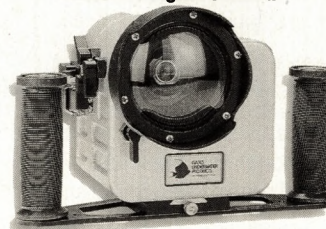
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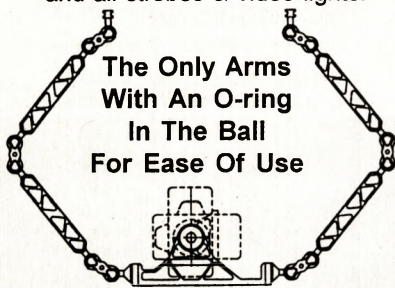
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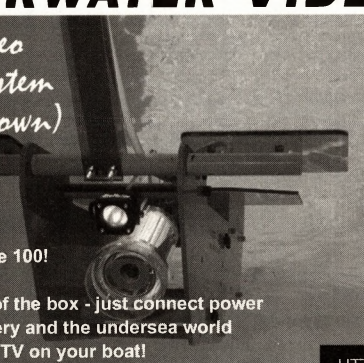
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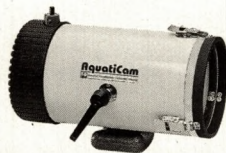
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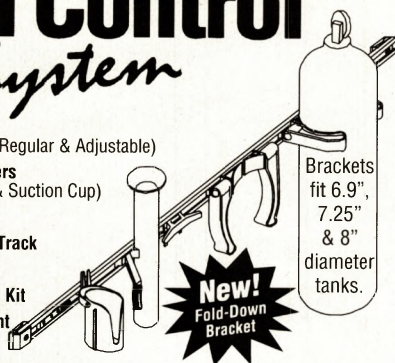


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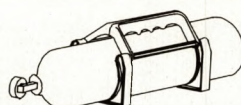
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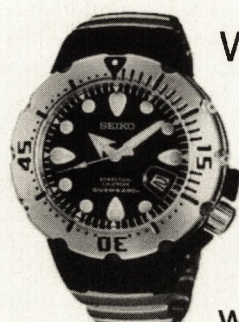
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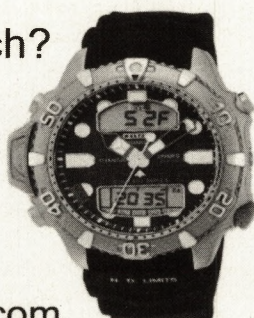


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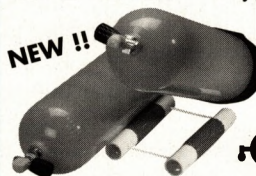
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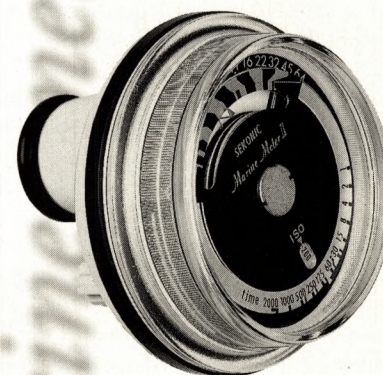
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I hate buying cars. Know what I mean? What color? Do you want the Royal XYZ edition or would you prefer the one without brakes? Leather interior or yak's hair? No, you can't get that with that model, but we can special-order it. It'll only take three years.

For me, the ideal way to buy a car (and I actually just did something very similar to this) would be to walk in, not test-drive a thing and say, "I want that one. When can I pick it up? And let's please keep the conversation to a minimum."

Now, when it comes to vacations, you can imagine that I'm not much for doing a lot of legwork to plan them. I decide where I want to go—so get me there, make me comfortable, and leave me alone.

If this form of one-stop dive-vacation shopping appeals to you, you might want to opt for Cozumel for your next dive trip. Aside from the obvious attraction of diving this wonderful island, it's also home to Del Mar Vacations, your no-sweat, one-stop vacation "store."

At Del Mar Vacations (DMV), one phone call does it all. Call DMV and they can take care of everything: discount airfares, hotel reservations, diving, car rentals and just about any other water-

sport. It's the way to vacation for people who want to start vacationing when they start planning the trip.

You can stay at La Ceiba, Coz's best-known dive-oriented hotel, where the water is so close that you can almost step out your door and be underwater. La Ceiba recently renovated its rooms and lobby, and the hotel also has restaurants, two pools and a hot-tub spa.

Then there's the Casa Del Mar (CDM), Cozumel's original dive lodge. If you want to save even more money, you'll stay here, just a few steps inland from the water. CDM features value accommodations—good value because all the rooms feature cable television, air conditioning and a phone. There's also a restaurant and a pool, and duplex and suite accommodations are available.

Want to have wheels while you're on-island? (You must do a trip around the island at least once while you're on Cozumel.) DMV can fix you up with the latest in four-by-fours, air-conditioned cars and even the dreaded I'm-on-vacation-I-gotta-rent-a-Moped two-wheelers.

As for the diving, well, it rarely gets better than Cozumel. This is Drift Diving Central and you'll soar along beau-

tiful coral canyons and mountains with barely a ripple of your fins. The water is beautifully clear, the coral healthy, and the diving just incredibly simple.

And who better to dive with than Del Mar Aquatics, the best-known name in Cozumel? Fast boats with local dive masters and crews who really know the waters, a full-service dive shop across from CDM and a beautiful white-sand, park-like area where you can rest up from a "strenuous" day of drift diving.

If you are heading for Cozumel and are craving a dose of Del Mar treatment, call or play in their Web site to get the latest update on special offers and discounts. For a limited time, divers get a free mesh dive backpack (a \$50 value) as part of their vacation package deal. Just add a bathing suit and you're good to go—they have a complete line of rental gear if you need it.

See? One phone call. No sweat, no hassle, no decisions—just a dive vacation. The way it's meant to be. —George Jensen

AT A GLANCE

DEL MAR VACATIONS

888-69-CEIBA or 281-257-1771; Fax: 281-257-1783;
e-mail: info@godelmar.com; Web: www.godelmar.com.



PLAZA RESORT BONAIRE

Some of the world's best diving is found off the Dutch island of Bonaire. Add to that unspoiled beaches, desert landscapes and lush marine life and you have all the enticement you need for your next dive trip to the Plaza Resort Bonaire. This stunning five-star resort will cater to all your diving and vacationing needs. Located on more than 12 acres of coastline, this is one of the most exciting and romantic resorts in the Caribbean.

Only minutes away from the airport and Bonaire's capital, Kralendijk, the Plaza Resort offers guests superb accommodations and amenities. There are 200 spacious suites and villas, complete with spectacular views of the ocean or the man-made lagoon from your patio or balcony. All rooms include cable TV, telephone, in-room safe, air conditioning and private, luxurious baths. The villas include fully equipped kitchens complete with refrigerator, oven, dishwasher and microwave oven. Three great restaurants and several bars are on the premises, and you'll find other essentials in the shops and mini-market. Plaza also features a beauty center, conference facilities, a gym, tennis, a swimming

pool, car rentals and a brand-new casino.

And don't forget the water activities. There are Boston Whalers to cruise the open water, aqua jogging, windsurfing, kayaking and snorkeling.

Divers will love Plaza Resort's full-service dive operation, Toucan Diving. All your diving needs are taken care of, including IDD/PADI/NAUI instruction, a complete nitrox program, gear, photo and video rental, E-6 developing, photo developing and printing. Toucan Diving operates three dive boats, all equipped with oxygen, medic first aid, fresh water and VHF radios. Only 12 divers max on each trip.

Boat dives are scheduled throughout the day; night dives are scheduled once a week or on request; and shore diving is available 24 hours a day. Special guided shore dives take place on the east coast and guided dive safaris are planned at the famed Washington-Slagbaai National Park.

Several diving packages are available through Plaza Resort Bonaire and Toucan Diving. The first dive is always a

check-out dive and orientation to diving in Bonaire. Six days of two single-tank boat dives per day with unlimited shore diving is only \$278. A Romance Package is also offered for the non-diver. This includes 7 nights hotel accommodations, ground transfers, complimentary upgrade to oceanview room, champagne, one morning "breakfast in bed", romantic sunset cruise, one "sunset dinner" for two on the beach, snorkeling equipment rental for one day and more.

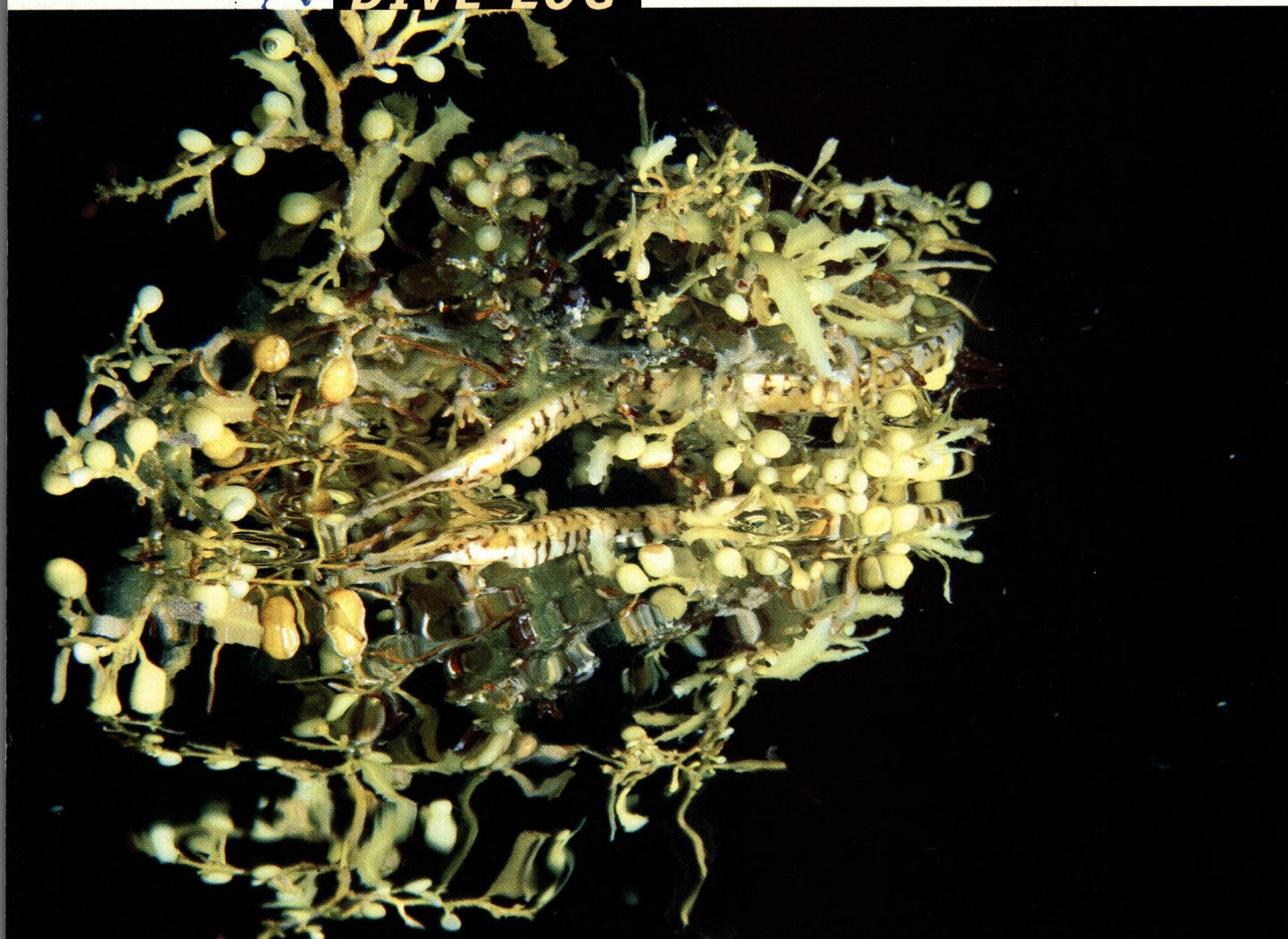


AT A GLANCE

TROPICAL ADVENTURES

For more information and reservations: 800-723-2679;

e-mail: dive@divetropical.com; Web: www.divetropical.com



CAMOUFLAGE AS ART

Expertly hidden by its cryptic color pattern, the sargassum pipefish escapes predation and remains a stealthy hunter. This photo, shot by author Paul Humann, is included in the new book, *Reef Fish Behavior* (see related story on page 68.) The book describes unusual fish antics that divers frequently see on the reef such as cleaning symbiosis, feeding and mating activities. It also describes the art of color and camouflage. The more than 20 species of pipefish in the Caribbean region are experts at blending in with their surroundings. They are so good, divers rarely see them. Those who do can pat themselves on the back for being acutely observant.

PHOTOGRAPHER

Paul Humann

DIVE SITE

Caribbean

REFERENCE

***Reef Fish Behavior*,
a new book by Paul
Humann and Ned
DeLoach. (See fea-
ture on page 68).**

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